

An Exegesis of the Qur'ān

BY:

al-'Allāmah as-Sayyid
Muḥammad Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā'ī

VOLUME 3

WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ISLAMIC SERVICES



AL-MĪZĀN

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Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī

VOLUME 3

Translated by:

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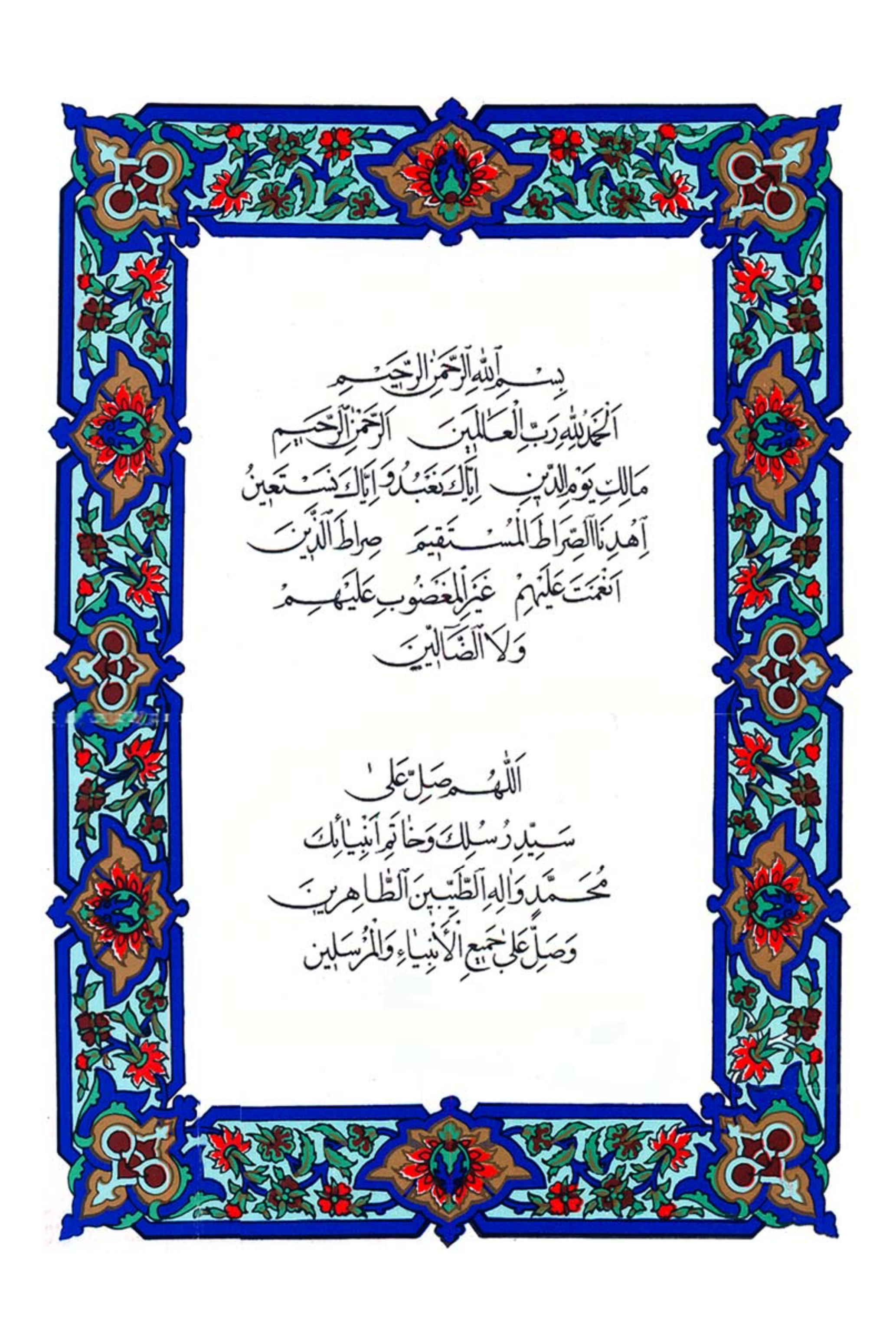
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In the Name of Allāh,
The All-compassionate, The All-merciful

Praise belongs to Allāh, the Lord of all being;
the All-compassionate, the All-merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgement;
Thee only we serve, and to Thee alone we pray for succour:
Guide us in the straight path;
the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful,
nor of those who are astray.

* * * * *

O' Allāh! send your blessings to the head of your messengers and the last of your prophets,
Muḥammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send your blessings to all your prophets and envoys.


بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله رب العالمين الرحمن الرحيم
مالك يوم الدين إياك نعبد وإياك نستعين
اهدنا الصراط المستقيم صراط الذين
أنعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم
ولا الضالين
اللهم صل على
سيد رسلك وخاتم أنبيائك
محمد وآله الطيبين الطاهرين
وصل على جميع الأنبياء والمرسلين

CONTENTS

TRANSLITERATION

ARABIC LETTERS

Symbol	Transliteration	Symbol	Transliteration
ء	**’**	ك	**k**
ب	**b**	ل	**l**
ت	**t**	م	**m**
ث	**th**	ن	**n**
ج	**j**	ه	**h**
ح	**ḥ**	و	**w**
خ	**kh**	ي	**y**
د	**d**	ة	**ah, at**
ذ	**dh**		(construct state)
ر	**r**	ال	article **al-** and **’l** (even before the antepalatals)
ز	**z**		
س	**s**		
ش	**sh**		**<u>Long Vowels</u>**
ص	**ṣ**	آ	**ã**
ض	**ḍ**	و	ũ
ط	**ṭ**	ي	**ī**
ظ	**ẓ**		
ع	**‘ or ‘**		**<u>Short Vowels</u>**
غ	**gh**	ـَ	**a**
ف	**f**	ـُ	**u**
ق	**q**	ـِ	**i**

تصدير

١- العلاّمة الشّهير و المفكّر و الفيلسوف الإسلاميّ المعاصر، السّيّد محمّد حسين الطّباطبائي (١٣٢١/١٩٠٤ - ١٤٠٢/١٩٨١) رحمه الله سبق و أن عرّفناه بعض التّعريف في تصديرنا للجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الإنجليزيّة للميزان، الّذي سينشر، بحول الله و قوّته، في القريب العاجل.

٢- اشتهر العلاّمة الطّباطبائي رحمه الله بالعديد من آثاره و أهمّها تفسيره الكبير (الميزان في تفسير القرآن) الّذي يصحّ أن يعدّ الدّعامة الأساسيّة للتّقدير العلميّ الّذي ناله العلاّمة الطّباطبائي في العالم الاسلاميّ.

٣- شعرنا بالضّرورة الملحّة إلى نشر تفسير للقرآن الكريم بالانجليزيّة، وبعد مداولات و استشارات، وقع اختيارنا على (الميزان) لانّا وجدناه يجمع الى حدّ ما، بين النّقاط الّتي لابدّ منها في تفسير متكامل للقرآن الكريم و بين ما تتطلّبه الذّهنيّة المعاصرة للقارئ المسلم فاقترحنا على الأستاذ العلاّمة السّيّد سعيد أختر رضوي القيام بهذه المهمّة، لما نعهده فيه من القدرة العلميّة على فهم النّصّ العربيّ، و كفاءته الأدبيّة في التّعبير و التّرجمة، و قد اعتمدنا عليه في ذلك، ليكون هو الزّعيم بالتّرجمة الانجليزيّة و المسئول عنها، كما كان العلاّمة الطّباطبائي رحمه الله هو الزّعيم ببحوث الكتاب و المرجع المسئول عنها.

٤– قدّمنا نشر ترجمة الجزء الثاني من (الميزان) لأنّه كان قد تهيّأ للنشر، والجزء الأوّل لم يتهيّأ بعد – لأسباب لا نريد أن نشرح أمرها هنا – فلم نر من الصّالح إرجاء نشره. و قد وضعنا قائمتين (الأولى) باسماء المؤلّفين الوارد ذكرهم في مجموع أجزاء (الميزان) و (الثّانية) بأسماء الكتب الّتي هي بحاجة الى التّعريف، و قد ألحقنا هاتين القائمتين بالجزء الأوّل من التّرجمة الانجليزيّة. و لكنّا وضعنا جدولين آخرين يجدهما القارئ ملحقين بكل جزء من أجزاء التّرجمة.

ومن الله سبحانه نسأل، واليه نبتهل أن يجعل عملنا خالصا لوجهه الكريم، وأن يوفّقنا لإتمام ما بدأنا ويسدّدنا في خطوتنا هذه وخطواتنا المقبلة، إنّه نعم المولى ونعم النّصير.

المؤسّسة العالميّة للخدمات الإسلاميّة	١٤٠٢/٤/٦
(لجنة التّأليف والتّرجمة والنّشر)	١٩٨٢/٢/١
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FOREWORD

1. al-‘Allāmah as-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī (1321/1904 — 1402/1981) — may Allāh have mercy upon him was a famous scholar, thinker and the most celebrated contemporary Islamic philosopher. We have introduced him briefly in the first volume of the English translation of *al-Mīzān* which will be published, by the help of Allāh, in the near future.

2. al-‘Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī is well-known for a number of his works of which the most important is his great exegesis *al-Mīzān fī tafsīri ’l-Qur’ān* which is rightly counted as the fundamental pillar of scholarly work which the ‘Allāmah has achieved in the Islamic world.

3. We felt the necessity of publishing an exegesis of the Holy Qur’ān in English. After a thorough consultation, we came to choose *al-Mīzān* because we found that it contained in itself, to a considerable extent, the points which should necessarily be expounded in a perfect exegesis of the Holy Qur’ān and the points which appeal to the mind of the contemporary Muslim reader. Therefore, we proposed to al-Ustādh al-‘Allāmah as-Sayyid Sa‘īd Akhtar ar-Raḍawī to undertake this task because we were familiar with his intellectual ability to understand the Arabic text of *al-Mīzān* and his literary capability in expression and translation. So we relied on him for this work and consider him responsible for the English translation as al-‘Allāmah aṭ-Ṭabāṭabā’ī was responsible for the Arabic text of *al-Mīzān* and its discussions.

4. We have proceeded to publish the translation of the second

volume of the Arabic *al-Mīzān* earlier as it was ready for printing, whereas the first volume is not ready yet for the reasons which we do not wish to state here. So we saw no reason in delaying its printing. We have included two appendixes: one for the authors cited in all the volumes of *al-Mīzān,* and the other for the books cited therein. These two appendixes have been attached to the first volume of the English translation. Apart from this, the reader will find two appendixes in all the volumes of the translation of *al*-Mīzān.

* * * *

We implore upon Allāh to effect our work purely for His pleasure, and to help us to complete this work which we have started. May Allāh guide us in this step which we have taken and in the future steps, for He is the best Master and the best Helper.

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al-Mīzān

Volume Three

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

يا أيها الذين آمنوا كتب عليكم الصيام كما كتب على الذين من قبلكم
لعلكم تتقون -١٨٣. أياماً معدودات فمن كان منكم مريضاً أو على سفر
فعدة من أيام أخر وعلى الذين يطيقونه فدية طعام مسكين فمن تطوع
خيراً فهو خير له وأن تصوموا خير لكم إن كنتم تعلمون - ١٨٤. شهر
رمضان الذي أنزل فيه القرآن هدى للناس وبينات من الهدى والفرقان
فمن شهد منكم الشهر فليصمه ومن كان مريضاً أو على سفر فعدة من
أيام أخر يريد الله بكم اليسر ولا يريد بكم العسر ولتكملوا العدة
ولتكبروا الله على ما هداكم ولعلكم تشكرون - ١٨٥.

''O' you who believe! Fasting has been prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard yourselves (against evil) (183), *for a counted number of days; but whoso among you be sick or on a journey than* (he shall fast) *that number of other days; and those who are with difficulty able to do so, on them is a redemption by feeding a poor man, and whoso on his own accord performs good, it is better for him, and that you fast is better for you if you know* (184); *The month of Ramadan, in which was sent down the Qur'an, a guidance for the people, and clear evidence of guidance and discrimination* (between right and wrong); *so whosoever of you witnesses the month, he shall fast therein; and whosoever is sick or on a journey* (he shall fast) *the same number of other days*; *Allāh desires ease for you and He desires not hardship for you; and so that you may complete the* (prescribed) *number, and that you may glorify Allāh for his guiding you, and so that you may be thankful to Him*. (185)

GENERAL COMMENT

The sequence of the three verses shows that they were revealed together; *for a counted number of days* (in the beginning of the second verse) is an adverbial phrase which qualifies the word, *fasting,* in the first verse; and *the month of Ramaḍān* in the beginning of the 3rd verse is a predicate, whose subject is a deleted but understood pronoun denoting the words *counted number of days* (which appear in the 2nd verse). Thus it would mean, *the counted number of days is the month of Ramaḍān.* Alternatively, it may be a subject of a deleted but implied predicate, and would mean *the month of Ramaḍān is that in which fasting is prescribed for you.* As a third possibility, it may be an alternative of the *fasting* mentioned in the first verse. Whatever be the grammatical position, it is the explanation and description of the counted number of days in which fasting has been prescribed. Therefore, all three verses are a well arranged statement with a single aim, i.e., promulgation of the ordinance of fast in the month of Ramaḍān.

Obviously, the first sentences have been revealed to prepare minds for the final ones. The first two verses are like a preparatory statement, with which a speaker tries to keep the audience calm and quiet, and this ensures that they do not become restless on hearing the tough commandment which he is to announce shortly. All the sentences in these two verses gently lead the hearer's mind to the ordinance of the fast of Ramaḍān. They mention such things as remove gloom and anxiety, cheer the soul and imperceptibly assuage the mood of unruliness and disobedience. They point to various concessions and indulgences which have been incorporated in the commandment. And all this is in addition to the goods of this world and the next which may be earned by following the law. It is for this reason that the sentence *0 you who believe! Fasting has been prescribed for you is* followed by the phrase *as it was prescribed for those before you* — hinting that you should not think it as a heavy burden nor should you feel gloomy, for it is not a new command for which you have been singled out; it was ordained for previous peoples also.

It further encourages them by pointing out: by following this command

you may get what you aim at by your faith — and that is piety (*taqwā*, التّقوى) which is the best thing for those who believe in Allāh and the Day of Judgement — and you are believers. This is the import of the phrase *so that you may guard yourselves* (*tattaqūn* ,تتقون , from the same root as *taqwā*).

Moreover, this worthy action, which inspires the hope of piety in you (as it did in your predecessors) does not involve *all your time, nor even most of it. It is only for a counted number of days.* The word days (*ayyāman* , ايّاما) is a common noun, and it shows insignificance. Its adjective, ''counted'', hints that the number is very easy (as we see in the words of Allāh in the Qur'ān, 12:20, *And they sold him for a small price, some counted pieces of silver*).

Allāh, now points to further concessions: Look how We have been lenient on the man who has a genuine difficulty in keeping the fast, as well as on the person who is hard pressed to do so. Such a man should redeem it by a substitute which is neither difficult nor heavy, and that is feeding a poor person. *But whoso among you be sick or on a journey, then* (he shall fast) *that number of other days; and those who are with difficulty able to do so, on them is a redemption by feeding a poor man.* You must appreciate that this act brings much good to you; and that Allāh has made it as easy for you as possible. It is in your interest that you should perform it willingly and eagerly without reluctance, sluggishness or annoyance; because if one performs a good deed on his own accord, it is better for him than if he does it under coercion. This point is made clear in the words: *And whoso on his own accord performs good, it is better for him, and that you fast is better for you if you know.*

In this way, the first two verses prepare minds for the third verse, *So whosoever of you witnesses the month, he shall fast therein ….*

In the light of this explanation, it is clear that the sentence in the first verse, *Fasting has been prescribed for you,* is the report of the fact of prescription; it is not the initial promulgation [like the verses, *0 Ye who believe! retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of the slain ...*(2:178) and *Bequest is prescribed for you, when death approaches one of you if he leaves behind wealth, for parents and near relatives …* (2:180)] There is a difference between retaliation in the matter of the slain and bequeathing to parents and near relatives on the one hand, and the fast on the other. Retaliation for the slain is a

matter which is dear to the hearts of the heirs of the slain; and it conforms with the natural rage which is inflamed in them when they see the murderer alive and safe without any worry for the crime he had committed. Likewise, tender love for one's relatives is in itself enough to encourage one to make one's will in favour of one's parents and relatives, and especially so at the time of death and permanent separation. These two commandments, i.e., retaliation and bequest are in conformity with natural feelings, and, as such, they do not require preparatory statements or preambles before their promulgation. But the case of the fast is different. Here the man is denied his choicest desires and most coveted acquirements, i.e., food, drink and sex. It is a heavy burden which should, by nature, be disliked by him. When such an order is directed to the general public it needs some preparatory and introductory statement so that they may accept this hardship willingly and eagerly. There fore, the prescription in the verses of retaliation for the slain and bequest for parents and relatives is the original promulgation (without need of any preamble); but the words: *Fasting has been prescribed for you* is just a report of the commandment and has been used as the preamble of the actual command which comes later: *so whosoever of you witnesses the month, he shall fast therein ...* .

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *O ye who believe.* This mode of address reminds them of a virtue (faith, belief) which encourages them to accept what ever order is given to them by their Lord, even if it is against their desires and habits.

The verse of retaliation also begins with this very phrase because the Christians, unlike other people, did not believe in retaliation. Therefore, it was necessary to point out that retaliation is allowed to the faithful, even if others do not believe in it.

Qur'ān: *Fasting has been written* (i.e. prescribed) *for you, as it was written* (i.e. prescribed) *for those before you*:

''Kitābah'' (الكتابة) means to write. Metaphorically it is used for prescription, enjoinment and irrevocable decision, as Allāh says, *Allāh has written down*: *I will most certainly prevail, I and My apostles* (58:21); *and We write down what they have sent before and their*

footprints (36:12); *and We wrote on them in it, a soul for a soul* (5:45).

''Siyām'' and *''ṣawm''* (الصّيام and الصّوم) are infinite verbs meaning to abstain from an action, like abstaining from eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, talking, walking, etc. Also it is said that it means abstaining from desirable and coveted things. Later in religion, it was mostly used for abstaining from some specified things from dawn-break upto sunset with intention (*niyyah,* النّيّة)

Those before you means the nations that came before the advent of Islam: the followers of the previous prophets, like the followers of Mūsā and 'Īsā etc. It is the meaning understood from this phrase wherever it occurs in the Qur'ān.

The comparison *as it was prescribed for those before you* is not general; it does not cover all the peoples, nor all the details of the Islamic fast. In other words, it does not mean that the fast was prescribed for the followers of all previous prophets, nor that the fast ordained for them was like the Islamic fast in all the details, like period, rules and other particulars. The comparison is only in the principles of fasting and abstaining from some things without any regard to the particulars.

Those before you indicates followers of the previous religions without specifying who they were. The words *as it was written* (prescribed), show that they were followers of revealed religions; and that the fast was ordained for them. but the present Old and New Testaments do not say that fasting was compulsory and obligatory; rather they extol and praise it. Still, the Jews and the Christians do fast on various days in the year, in various ways, like abstaining from meat, or milk, or food and drink. There are stories in the Qur'ān of the fasts of Zakariyyā and Maryam in which they abstained from talking.

Fasting was also observed in traditional (unrevealed) religions, as is reported from ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome. The Hindus observe fasts even now. Apparently, it is human nature itself that leads one to believe that the fast is an act of worship which brings one nearer to the Creator.

Sometimes it is said that *those before you* means the Jews and the Christians; or that it refers to only the previous prophets (and not their followers). The basis of these assertions are some traditions which are not free from weakness.

Qur'ān: *So that you may guard yourselves* (against evil) (or, so

that you may become pious).

Idol-worshippers fasted to please their deities, or, on committing a sin, to extinguish their deities' anger, or to get their prayers granted. This turns the fast into a trade or barter; the man performs what is needed by the deity and the deity in its turn grants the prayers of the man; the worshipper pleases the deity so that the deity may do what will please the worshipper.

But Allāh is All-holiness. No want, need, emotion or grievance can be attributed to Him even in imagination. In short, He is free from every shortcoming. So, all the good effects of the worship (whatever the act of worship and whatever the good results) return to the worshipper himself, not to the Lord. The same is the case of sins. Allāh has said: *If you do good, you do good for your own souls, and if you do evil it is for them* (only) (17:7). It is this principle which the Qur'ān teaches by always connecting the effects of good and evil actions with man: man, who is all needs and wants, as Allāh says *0 man! You are the ones who stand in need of Allāh, and Allāh is He who is the Self-sufficient* (35:15); and refers to the fact specifically in connection with fasting in the words, so *that you may become pious* (may guard your selves against evil).

There is no doubt that one may achieve piety through fasting. Everyone naturally feels that for union with the sublime world of holiness and for rising to the height of perfection and spirituality man should first of all restrain himself from gratifying material desires. He should keep away from satisfying the body's lust and inclinations, and purge his soul from the love of worldly affairs. In short, he should guard himself against all such things which may carry him away from his Lord. This is piety (*taqwā* , التّقوى) which is achieved through abstinence from lust and desires.

Even more beneficial and more effective for the common man is the abstinence from common lawful desires like food, drink and sex. This trains him to keep away from unlawful things; and creates in him the will to guard himself against sin and evil, and to come nearer to Allāh. Obviously, when he accepts the words of Allāh by abstaining from lawful desires, and heeds to and obeys His commandment, he will be more needful and obedient to His words in connection with sins and unlawful things.

Qur'ān: *Counted number of days* (*ayyāman ma'dūdātin,* ايّامامعدودات): ''*ayyāman*'' has the vowel of (*fatḥah*, ـً , الفتحه) because an adverb of time, in (*fī*, فى) is understood before it. It is connected with the word fast (*ṣiyām*, الصّيام). It has already been explained that bringing the word ''days'' as a common noun and attaching to it the adjective, ''counted'', implies that the order given is not very difficult or bothersome. This in turn encourages the man to obedience. Also it has been maintained that the words *the month of Ramaḍān* …. are the explanation of ''days''. So, the meaning of *counted number of days is the month of Ramaḍān.*

Some commentators have said that the words, *counted number of days,* mean three days in every month and the fast of the day of 'Āshūrā' (10th day of Muharram). Some others have said that it is the 13th, 14th and 15th days of every month plus the fast of 'Āshūrā' According to them, the Messenger of Allāh and the Muslims used to fast on these days, then Allāh revealed the verses *the month of Ramaḍān in which was sent down the Qur'ān* ... and this verse abrogated the previous system and made the fast of Ramaḍān obligatory. These commentators rely on many traditions of the Sunnīs — traditions which contradict each other.

There are many things which prove the falsity of these assertions:

First: Fasting is a common act of worship involving the whole *ummah.* Had there been a system, at any time, of fasting for three days in a month, it would have been recorded in history, and there would not have been any difference about its ordination and then abrogation. But it is not so.

Moreover, saying that the fast of the day of 'Āshūrā' was obligatory (or even desirable), like the fast of the three days of every month, is the innovation of the Umayyids (May Allāh curse them). They wiped out the progeny of the Messenger of Allāh and his family-members on the day of 'Āshūrā'; they killed their men-folk, imprisoned their women and children and looted their belongings in the battle of Karbalā'; and then they regarded it as a blessed auspicious day. They took that day as an *'īd* (festival), started its fast to obtain its supposed blessings, and then invented for it many virtues and excellences. They forged many traditions showing that it was an Islamic festival. They went even further and said that it was a common festival which had been observed even by the pagans of Arabia, as well as by the Jews and the Christians since the advent of Mūsā and 'Īsā.

But all these assertions are baseless. This day has no national importance like the Nowrūz of the Persians, nor did there occur any victory or important event on that day to make it an Islamic festival (like the Day of the first revelation or the Birrthday of the Prophet) nor has it any religious aspect which could make it a purely religious festival like ‘Īdu ’1-fiṭr and ‘Īdu ’1-aḍḥā. So how could it be given importance without any reason?

Second: The context makes it impossible to say that the 3rd verse, i.e. *the month of Ramaḍān ... ,* was revealed alone, to abrogate the first two verses. As mentioned earlier, it is the predicate of a deleted but understood subject, or the subject of a deleted but implied predicate. Thus it is a clarification of the words, *counted number of days,* and all three verses are one inter-related speech with a single aim, i.e. the promulgation of the obligatory fast of the month of Ramaḍān.

Those commentators claim that the phrase, *month of Ramaḍān,* is the subject and words, *in which was sent down the Qur’ān,* are its predicate. If we accept this claim then this third verse would become an independent sentence, capable of being revealed alone. But then it could not abrogate the previous two verses, because there would be no contradiction between this verse and the previous ones; and no verse can abrogate another when there is no contradiction between them.

Even weaker than this is another view, which appears in some writings. It says that the second verse, *for a counted number of days,* abrogated the first verse, *Fasting has been prescribed for you…*They claim that fasting was prescribed for the Christians, but they went on changing its number after ‘Isā (a.s.) until finally it was settled as fifty days. Allāh then ordained it for the Muslims by the first verse, and people fasted accordingly in the beginning of Islam, until the second verse *counted number of days* was revealed and the new system was introduced abrogating the first order. This view is clearly weaker and more false than the previous ones and all the objections mentioned therein apply here also. Clearly the second verse is complementary to and a continuation of the first verse. The traditions upon which these people have based their views are obviously against the clear meaning and context of the Qur’ān.

Qur’ān: *But whoso among you be sick or on a journey then* (he shall fast) *that number of other days*:*‘‘f…’’* (ف , then, but, so, and, etc.)

here is for derivation. It means that the sentence is an off-shoot of *Fasting has been prescribed on you* and *for a counted number of days.* The fast is written down and obligatory and the number is a part of that obligation. The basic obligation (fast) cannot be neglected and the same is the case of the prescribed number. Even if for any reason like sickness or journey the obligation of fasting during the counted number of days (i.e. month of Ramaḍān) is waived, the obligation of fasting an equal number of days after that month will still be enforced, in order to make up for the lost days of Ramaḍān. It is this principle which has been mentioned in the 3rd verse *and so that you may complete the* (prescribed) *number.* Here we find another significance of the phrase, *counted number of days;* it implies that the order given is not very difficult, and also it shows that the number is an integral part of the said obligation.

‘‘Sickness’’ is the opposite of ‘‘health’’. *Safar* (journey, السّفر) is derived from a root-word which means to uncover. It is as though the traveller is uncovered by going out of his house which is his refuge and shelter.

Allāh used the words, *on a journey,* and did not say *a traveler* ; it shows that for the purpose of this rule one must be on a journey presently. Past travel or a travel which is yet to start (i.e. to commence later) would not make one entitled to this concession.

Most of the Sunnī scholars say that this sentence shows only that a sick person or a traveler is allowed, but not compelled, leave the fast. According to them, a sick person or a traveler has the choice of fasting or not fasting. But, as has been explained earlier, the meaning of *then that number of other days* is that he is (not only allowed but is) ‘compelled’ not to fast during the originally prescribed days; he must fast that number of ‘‘other days’’. This is narrated from the Imams of the *Ahlu ’l-bayt.* Also, it is the ruling of a group of the companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) like ‘Abdu ’r-Raḥmān ibn ‘Awf, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar, Abū Hurayrah and ‘Urwah ibn az-Zubayr. The Sunnī scholars say that this sentence means: *but whoso among you be sick or on a journey* (and did not fast) *then* (he shall fast) *that number of other days;* thus they suppose that there is a deleted but implied verb in this sentence. But this supposition is incorrect because:

First: such a supposition is against the apparent meaning. A deletion can be accepted only when the context demands it; and the context of this sentence does not need any such thing.

Second: even if we accept this implied verb, it will not mean that a sick person or a traveler has only an option to break his fast. In these verses Allāh is promulgating a law and in this context the hypothetical, implied words, *and did not fast* will mean that during sickness or journey, breaking one's fast is not a sin, rather it is lawful. The word 'lawful' is a general one, meaning all or any of its three kinds: obligatory, recommended and allowed. There is no reason to suppose that in this context it would mean only ''allowed'' (to the exclusion of the other two meanings). Rather there is a reason against such a supposition, because the Wise Law-Giver when promulgating a law cannot leave one of its important and obligatory aspects.

Qur'ān: *and those who are with difficulty able to do so on them is a redemption, by feeding a poor man*: 'spending one's active strength in a work' (*iṭāqah,* الاطاقة **)** is the meaning explained by some scholars. It necessarily means that the work would be done with difficulty and by overstraining oneself. *Fidyah* (الفدية) means a substitute. Here it is a material substitute, i.e., food for a poor man. The word implies a food which satiates a hungry poor man; and it should be the normal food of the man.

The rule of the substitute also is obligatory, like the rule of repaying a fast afterward for the sick or the traveller. It is shown by the words, 'on those' (*'ala'l-ladhīna,* على الذين), which is obviously for obligation and not merely for option or choice.

Some people have said that this sentence gave the people an option and then it was abrogated. According to them, Allāh had given all those who were able to fast an option to keep the fast or to redeem it by feeding every day a poor man, because in the beginning people were not accustomed to fast. Then it was abrogated by the sentence, *So whosoever of you witnesses the month, he shall fast therein.* Some of those writers said that this verse abrogated the option so far as able persons were concerned. But the rule regarding those who were unable to fast (like extremely old persons, pregnant women and women who are suckling a baby) remained unabrogated and they could give the substitute.

By God, such an explanation is nothing but playing with the Qur'ān and cutting and chopping up the verses into shreds and fragments. If you study these 3 verses, you will see that it is all a well-connected speech, delivered with one aim, all in one context only. its sentences are connected with each other, having a sweetness and flow of their own. But if you cut it into pieces and accept these people's interpretation then everything will fall out of context and some phrases will contradict others; the latter sentences will clash with the former ones. According to their explanation, first it says 'Fasting is prescribed for you', then it says that 'those who are able to fast have an option to fast or to redeem it by a substitute'; then it goes on to say that 'fasting is obligatory for all of you when you witness the month'; then it abrogates the rule of redemption for able persons and keeps it unchanged for unable ones (while the fact remains that even before the supposed abrogation that verse was not concerned at all with those who were unable. They want us to believe that the single word meaning 'those who are with difficulty able to do so (*yuṭīqūnahu,* يطيقونه) referred, before the abrogation, to those who were able to fast; and now after abrogation the same word means 'those who are unable to fast'! In short, according to these commentators, *those who are with difficulty able to do so* in the middle of the verse would abrogate *fasting is prescribed for you* which is in the beginning of the verse, because both would be contradictory to each other; but the question would arise why that abrogation was made conditional on ability without any apparent reason. Then again the sentence, So *whosoever of you witnesses the month he shall fast therein,* at the end of the verse, would abrogate *those who are with difficulty able* which is in the middle. Still the question would arise as to how it abrogated that rule for only those who were able to fast and not for those who were unable to do so, when the verse is unconditional and comprehensive and covers able and unable persons alike. Interestingly enough, the supposedly abrogated verse in itself did not cover those who were unable. This is its most obviously absurdity.

Add to it their assertion that the words, *the month of Ramaḍān ...,* abrogated the words, *counted number of days,* which in their turn abrogated the words, *Fast has been prescribed for you;* and then ponder with this background upon the meaning of the verses and you

will be astonished! Nothing of the verses would remain intact; all would have been abrogated!!

Qur'ān: *and whosoever on his own accord performs good it is better for him.*

'To do work willingly and gladly' (*taṭawwu',* التّطوع) is of the form *tafa''ul* (التّفعّل **)** from *ṭawu'* (الطّوع) which is the opposite of 'to dislike' (*kurh,* الكره)**.** The meaning of acceptance is implied in the form *tafa'ul* (التّفعّل)**;** therefore, the meaning of *taṭawwu'* (التّطوّع) is 'the present doing of work willingly and gladly without reluctance or annoyance, whether that work is obligatory or not'. The use of this word especially for non-obligatory good work was established among the Muslims long after the revelation of the Qur'ān, and this later usage is based on the view that it is only non-obligatory good work which is done willingly without compulsion, while there is a shade of compulsion in obligatory work: because there is no choice, it has to be done. Anyhow, the word *taṭawwu'* (التّطوع) in its root or form, was not used only for non-obligatory good work.

The preposition for derivation is here represented by *''f ...''* (ف ; and, so, etc.), and the sentence is an off-shoot of the previous sentences. Thus its meaning is: Fasting is prescribed for you, keeping in view your good and betterment, with the additional advantage that it brings you in line with previous peoples, and it has been made easy for you; therefore you should perform it willingly, to do it thus rather than doing it reluctantly.

It appears from the above that the words of Allāh: *whoso performs good willingly* have metaphorically put the 'cause' in the place of 'effect'. It says that to perform good willingly is better for him, instead of saying that to fast willingly is better. It is like the verse, *Indeed We know, it certainly grieves thee that which they say, but verily it is not thee that they belie, but it the signs of Allāh which the wrong-doers deny* (6:33), which means ''so endure it and do not be grieved because they do not deny ,thee...''

Sometimes it is said that the sentence, *whoso willingly performs good it is better for him,* is connected with the preceding sentence, i.e. *those who are with difficulty able to do so, on them is a redemption by feeding a poor man.* According to this interpretation it means that whoso performs non-obligatory good work by giving redemption twice — feeds

one poor man twice or two poor man once - it is better for him.

But there are three defects in this interpretation:

First: As mentioned earlier, there is no evidence to show that the word meaning ‘to do a work willingly’(*taṭawwu‘,* التّطوّع) is reserved for non-obligatory good work.

Second: In this interpretation ‘‘*f* ...’’ (ف) would be without any real significance. It has been mentioned above that the sentence is an off-shoot of the previous sentence. But what is the connection between the rule of redemption and giving non-obligatory food on one’s own accord?

Third: This interpretation confuses *adding something on one’s own accord* with *performing good willingly.* But obviously these are two separate things.

Qur’ān: *and that you fast is better for you if you know*: This sentence is complementary to the preceding one; and the meaning is: Perform willingly the fast which is prescribed for you because willingly doing a good deed is in itself another good work, and the fast is good for you, therefore, to fast willingly is good twice.

Sometimes it is said that the sentence, *and that you fast is better for you,* is addressed to those who are excused from fasting and not to the other believers who are obliged to fast and for whom the fast is compulsory. They say that its apparent meaning is that fasting is better for you, but there would be no objection if you do not fast. Obviously this meaning can fit the non-obligatory fast only, and not the obligatory one. The implication is that those who have the option not to fast (like a sick person or a traveller) are exhorted to fast and it is recommended to them to keep the fast rather than to break it.

There are five objections to this interpretation:

First: There is no evidence to support this view.

Second: The two sentences differ in syntax. The pronoun in *whoso among you be sick ...* is in the 3rd person, and those in *and that you fast ...* are in the 2nd person.

Third: The first sentence does not give any option to the sick man or the traveller. On the contrary, the words, *then* (he shall fast) *that number of other days,* obviously specify fasting on other days, as explained earlier.

Fourth: Even if we accept, for the sake of argument, that the first

sentence gives an option to the sick person and the traveller, that option is not between fasting and not fasting; it is between fasting in Ramaḍān and fasting on other days. And as both options are of a fast in different periods, merely the words, *that you fast is better for you,* cannot prove (in the absence of a clear context) any preference for fasting in Ramaḍān over fasting on other days.

Fifth: Allāh in this sentence is not promulgating any law, so that it may be argued that the description of the preference of fasting shows that in this particular case it is not obligatory. Rather, according to the context of this verse, its aim is to emphasise that the law given by Allāh cannot be devoid of benefit, good and advantage for you. Other examples of this style may be seen in many verses, like, *therefore turn to your Creator and kill your selves; that is better for you* (2:54); *then hasten to the remembrance of Allāh and leave off trading; that is better for you, if you know* (62:9); *you shall believe in Allāh and His Apostles, and struggle hard in Allāh's way with your properties and your lives; that is better for you if you know.* (61:11). And there are many such verses which show that this style of speech in the Qur'ān does not give an option to the believer, it only shows that a given order is for their own advantage and benefit.

Qur'ān: *the month of Ramaḍān in which was sent down the Qur'ān, a guidance ...*: The month of Ramaḍān is the ninth month of the lunar Arabic calendar, between the months of Sha'bān and Shawwāl. No other month has been mentioned by name in the Qur'ān. The word meaning 'to come down' is *nuzūl* (النّزول). Its transitive forms meaning 'to bring down' are *inzāl* (الانزال) and *tanzīl* (التّنزيل);the difference between them is that *inzāl* (الانزال) implies bringing down all at once, while *tanzīl* (التّنزيل) implies bringing down gradually.

The Qur'ān (القرآن) is the name of the book sent down to His Prophet Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), because it is recited and read. [It is derived from the root form *qara'a* (قرأ) meaning to read or recite.] Allāh has said: *Surely We made it an Arabic Qur'ān that you may understand* (43:3). This name is used for the whole book as well as for its parts.

The verse proves that the Qur'ān was sent down in the month of Ramaḍān. But Allāh has also said, *And the Qur'ān which We revealed in portions so that you may read it to the people by slow degrees, and*

We sent it down sending it (in portions) (17:106). And this verse clearly shows that it was revealed gradually during the entire period of the Call, which was about twenty-three years. Also accepted history proves it. This has apparently given room to the objection that there was a complete conflict between these two verses.

Some people have replied that the Qur'ān was sent down all at once to the lowest heaven in the month of Ramaḍān, then was revealed to the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) in portions, gradually, over about twenty-three years — the total period of the Call. This reply is based on some traditions, some of which will be quoted during the discussion of traditions.

Others have objected to this reply. They say that the words *a guidance for mankind, and clear evidence of guidance and distinction* which come immediately after these words do not support this interpretation; it is difficult to understand how the Qur'ān guided the people and was a source of discrimination between truth and falsehood during the time when it was in the heaven for years and years. This objection has been answered in this way: The Qur'ān is a guidance and a discrimination; it means that it had the potential and ability to guide those who needed its guidance and to discriminate between the truth and falsehood if there was any confusion. It could remain. with that hidden potential for a while until the time came for that potential to become a fact. There are countless examples in civil laws and state constitutions where many articles remain on paper until the occasion arises for their enforcement and they are then acted upon.

But we must admit that there is a great difference between constitutions and civil laws on one hand, and addresses and lectures on the other. Lectures or talks cannot be delivered a single moment before their time and occasion, and there are in the Qur'ān numerous verses of this type. For example: *Allāh surely heard the plea of her who pleads with you about her husband and complains to Allāh, and Allāh knows the contentions of both of you …* (58:1); *And when they see merchandise or sport, they break up for it and leave you standing ...* (62:11); *Of the believers are men who are true to the covenant which they made with Allāh: so of them is he who accomplished his vow, and of them is he who yet waits, and they have not changed in the least* (33:23). Moreover, the Qur'ān contains verses which have been

abrogated and other that abrogated them, and there is no sense in combining both of them in revelation sent all together.

Another interpretation is that the declaration that the Qur'ān was sent down in the month of Ramaḍān means that its first verses were revealed at that time.

It is difficult to accept this interpretation either. It is well known that the Prophet (s.a.w.) was sent with the Qur'ān, and the beginning of his Call was on the 27th Rajab, and there is between this date and Ramaḍān a gap of more than thirty days. How could the prophethood remain without the revelation of the Qur'ān for such a long period? Look at the 96th chapter which was the first chapter revealed (*Read in the name of your Lord ...*) Its context shows that it was revealed at the beginning of the Call. Likewise, the contents of the 74th chapter show that this also was revealed at the beginning.

Anyhow, the words, *the month of Ramaḍān in which was sent down the Qur'ān,* obviously do not mean that only the first verses were revealed at that time; and there is no such indication in the context. Therefore, such explanation would be without any proof or evidence. Also there are some more verses which have similar meaning. For example: *By the Book that makes manifest* (the truth), *Surely We sent it down on a blessed night; Surely We are ever-warning* (44:2-3) ; and *Surely We sent it down on the Night of Destiny* (97:1). Neither the apparent meanings of these verses nor their contexts support the view that *sending down of the Qur'ān* means the beginning of its revelation or the revealing its first verses.

Deep consideration of the verses of the Book shows something quite different from all the above interpretations. The verses which say that the Qur'ān was sent down in the month of Ramaḍān, have used the verbal form of *inzāl* (الانزال) which indicates sending down all at once. (Qur'ān 2:185; 44:23; 97:1). This ''all at once'' can mean either of two things:

1) To consider the complete book as one collection and look at it as a collective noun, as Allāh says in 10:24 *Like the water which we sent down from the sky.* Now, the rain comes down gradually, but it is looked upon as one whole collection and that is why the verbal form *inzāl* (الانزال), and not *tanzīl* (التّنزيل), has been used. The same is the meaning of the verse (this is) *a book We have sent down to you*

abounding in good, so that they may ponder over its verses ... (38:29) in which the whole book has been taken as one collection and the verbal form *inzā*l (الانزال) has been used.

2) To accept that the reality of the Book is something different from the words written on paper, etc. Its common meaning gives the picture of a thing which can be divided and sectionalized and which can be a subject of expansion and graduality, but the reality of the Book is a single, non-gradual thing which was sent down all at once, and not in pieces.

This second meaning is apparent in many verses of the Qur'ān. See for example the verses, (This is) *a book whose verses were confirmed, then they were divided* (made clear) *from One Wise All-aware.* (11:1) ''Strengthened'' or ''confirmed'' (*uḥkimat,* احكمت) is the opposite of ''divided'', ''made clear'' (*fuṣṣilat,* فصّلت). The literal meaning of *tafṣīl* (التّفصيل) is to divide intoparts and sections; that is why it implies explanation and clarification. Therefore, confirmed (*uḥkimat,* احكمت) would mean that in that state it was indivisible and indistinguishable in its parts, because it was a single unit without any part of section. The sequence of the words in this verse shows that this division which we find in the Qur'ān came to it later; before that, it was some thing confirmed, undivided and one.

More clear are the verses, *And certainly, We have brought them a Book which We have 'sectionalized'* (i.e. explained) *with knowledge, a guidance and a mercy for the people who believe. Do they wait for aught but its final interpretation? On the day when its final interpretation comes about, those who neglected it before will say: Indeed the Apostles of our Lord had brought the truth ...* (7:52-53). Also the verses, *And this Qur'ān is not such as could be forged by those besides Allāh, but it is a verification of that which is before it and a 'sectionalization'* (explained) *of the Book, there is no doubt in it, for the Lord of the worlds ... Nay, they rejected that of which they have not comprehensive knowledge, and its final interpretation has not yet come to them ...* (10:37-38). These verses, and especially the last one, clearly show that the division into parts is a thing which came later unto the Book. Therefore, the reality of the Book is one thing and the division which it was subjected to is another. The unbelievers rejected the division (explanation) of the Book because they neglected (forgot) something to

which that explanation led and which has been referred to here as the ‘‘final interpretation’’, and which will appear before them on the Day of Judgement and, at that time, they will inevitably know it, but then their regret will not benefit them, *and it is too late to repent.* These verses also imply that the real Book is the final interpretation of the Book.

Even far more clear are the verses, *By the Book which makes manifest* (the truth), *surely We made it an Arabic Qur'ān that you may understand, and surely it is in the Source of the Book with Us truly elevated, full of Wisdom*. (43:2-4)

It is apparent that there is a Book which makes manifest the truth, which was later made into an Arabic Qur'ān (Recited thing); and it was clothed in recited words and Arabic language so that people might understand; but in reality it is in the Source of the Book with Allāh, elevated, so that minds do not reach it, full of wisdom without any division. This verse contains the definition of the Manifest Book and that it is the foundation of the Qur'ān revealed later in plain Arabic.

In the same way Allāh says in 56:75—80 *But nay! I swear by the falling of stars - and most surely it is a great oath if you only know — Most surely it is an honoured Qur'ān in a Hidden Book, none touches it save the purified ones; A sending down* (revelation) *from the Lord of the worlds.* These verses clearly show that the Qur'ān has its own place, in the Hidden Book, where none touches it save the purified servants of Allāh, and it was only later that it was sent down. But before being sent down it was in a Book which is hidden from others. It is that Hidden Book which was referred to as the Source of the Book in 43:2-4. The verse 85:21-22 calls that Source the Guarded Tablet: *Nay! It is a Glorious Qur'ān in a Guarded Tablet.* This tablet is called Guarded because it is preserved and protected from changes; but we know that in the Qur'ān which was sent down gradually there are verses abrogating other verses; gradual completion itself is a sort of change. So this Qur'ān cannot be called the Guarded Tablet. In short, the Manifest Book is the foundation of this Qur'ān and this Qur'ān is like a clothing to that Reality.

Now we know that the relation of this Qur'ān, when it was gradually revealed, to the Manifest Book — which we call the Reality of the Book — is that of a dress to its wearer, and of a metaphor to its

real meaning, and of a proverb to its actual aim. It is because of this relationship that the word Qur'ān is sometimes used for the Real Book itself, as in the divine words, *Nay! It is a Glorious Qur'ān in a Guarded Tablet,* and in other similar verses. Therefore, we may correctly interpret the 'sending down of the Qur'ān', in the three verses, where it is said that it was revealed in the month of Ramaḍān (2:185), on a blessed night (44:3), on the Night of Destiny (97:1), as the revelation of the Source of the Book, i.e., the Manifest Book to the heart of the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) all at once. And the sectionalized Qur'ān was revealed to his heart gradually during the entire period of his prophetic Call.

This can be better appreciated when we study some other verses. Allāh says, *and do not make haste with the Qur'ān before its revelation is made complete to you…* (20:114) Also He says: *Do not move your tongue with it to make haste with it; surely on Us is the collecting of it and the reciting of it. Therefore, when We have recited it, then follow its recitation; again on Us is the explaining of it.* (75:16-19) These verses prove without any shadow of doubt that the Messenger of Allāh had prior knowledge of what was being revealed to him. That is why he was asked not to make haste in reciting before its revelation was completed. (This matter will be further explained, God willing, in its proper place)

In short, after pondering on the verses of the Qur'ān one can not but accept that:

This Qur'ān which was gradually revealed to the Prophet is based on a sublime Reality which the minds of common people cannot comprehend and the hands of defiled imaginations (defiled with lust, greed and materialism) cannot touch. That sublime Reality was revealed to the Prophet all at once in the month of Ramaḍān. And in this way Allāh taught him the real goal and meaning of the Book. (This subject will be explained under the verse 3:7.)

This is what a deep consideration of the verses of the Qur'ān leads one to believe. Of course, the traditionalists, and most of the theologians as well as the materialists (who do not accept the reality of metaphysics, the things beyond the matter) have no way but to interpret these and the like verses (e.g. the verses which say that the Qur'ān is a guidance, mercy, light, spirit, setting-place of the stars, manifest book, in a guarded

tablet, sent down from Allāh, in purified pages etc. etc.) as metaphorical and figurative expressions. Thus they have turned the Qur'ān into poetic prose!!

A writer has discussed the meaning of the revelation of the Qur'ān in the month of Ramaḍān. What follows is the gist of his writing; our comment will follow thereafter: ''There is no doubt that the beginning of the Call of the Prophet coincided with the revelation of the first revealed verses of the Qur'ān, and with his being asked by Allāh to announce the truth and warn the people. Also, there is no doubt that this happened in the night, as Allāh says, *Surely We sent it down on a blessed night* (44:3). Again, there is no doubt that it was in a night of the month of Ramaḍān as Allāh says, *the month of Ramaḍān, in which was sent down the Qur'ān.* (2:185)

''The whole Qur'ān was not revealed on that night ; but as the chapter of *The Opening* was revealed in it, and this chapter covers all the features and knowledge of the Qur'ān, it was as though the whole Qur'ān was revealed therein. (Moreover, the name ''Qur'ān'' is used for parts of the Book as well as for the complete book. Further, it is used in Qur'ānic terminology for all divine books like the Torah, the Injīl, the Zabūr etc.)

''The first revelation was *Read in the name of Thy Lord* ... (96:1), which was sent down on the 25th night of Ramaḍān. It was revealed when the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was proceeding to the house of Khadījah in the middle of the valley, looking at Jibrīl, who revealed to him the divine words, *Read in the name of Thy Lord Who created* ... When the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) received the revelation, it came into his mind to ask Jibrīl how to remember the name of his Lord. So, Jibrīl appeared before him and taught him the chapter of the Opening, *In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful, All praise belongs to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds* ... Then he taught him the method of prayer and disappeared. Then the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) regained consciousness, and did not find any trace of what he had witnessed except a fatigue which had overcome him because Jibrīl had pressed him hard at the time of revelation. Now, the Prophet continued on his way but he did not realize that he was sent by Allāh as His Messenger to mankind, commissioned to guide them unto the right path. When he entered the house, he slept the whole night because of weariness. In the morning, the angel returned and brought the revelation of God, *0 thou shrouded*

(in thy mantle!) *Arise, and warn ...* (74:1-2)''

Then he goes on to say:

''This is the meaning of revealing the Qur'ān in the month of Ramaḍān, and the coincidence of his Call with the Night of Destiny. As for the assertion of some Shī'ite books that the start of the Call was on the 27th day of Rajab, these traditions (which are only found in some Shī'ite books which were not written before the beginning of the 4th century of Hijrah) are against the Qur'ān, as you know.''

Then he says:

''And there are other traditions which support these (Shī'ite) traditions and say that the meaning of the revelation of the Qur'ān in the month of Ramaḍān is that it was sent down, before the beginning of the Call of the Prophet, from the Guarded Tablet to the Inhabited House, and there Jibrīl dictated it to the angels so that it might be sent down to the Prophet after the beginning of his Call. But these mythological ideas which have been interpolated into the traditions are rejected, first, because they are against the Qur'ān, and second, because *the guarded tablet* mentioned in the Qur'ān means the physical world, and *the inhabited house* means the earth because mankind lives therein.''

This was the gist of his writing; and, by my life, I do not know which sentence in this balderdash can be amended to con form with fact and reality. The damage is too extensive to be repaired.

First: It is a strange fabrication which he has uttered about the beginning of the prophethood and the revelation of the Qur'ān for the first time. Where did he find that *Read in the name of Thy Lord ...* was revealed to the Prophet when he was on his way; and that the chapter of *the Opening* was revealed to him then and there; and at the same time he was taught the prayer, and that thereafter he entered his house and slept weary and tired, and then in the morning the chapter of *al-Muddaththir* (the Shrouded) was revealed asking him to announce his prophethood and warn the people? All of this is just his imagination which has no basis at all; neither any clear verse nor any tradition of any standing supports it. It is just a mythological story which conforms with neither the Qur'ān nor the traditions, as you will see.

Second: He claims that it is accepted that the beginning of the prophethood and the revelation of the Qur'ān as well as the command to announce his prophethood, all happened at one and the same time. Then

he explains it by saying that the prophethood started with the revelation of the Qur'ān; and the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was a prophet without being an apostle (Messenger of Allāh) for one night, then in the morning he was given Messengership when the 74th chapter (The Shrouded) was revealed. But the writer cannot show any evidence to support himself either from the Qur'ān or from the traditions; and what he claims to be ''accepted'' is not accepted at all.

As for the traditions, what he has criticised the Shī'ite collections for (that they were written long after the incident) equally discredits all other collections of traditions and no trust can be had in any of them, because not a single book of the traditions, whether of the Sunnīs or the Shī'ahs, was written before the expiry of the second century of Hijrah or even later. This much about the traditions. The position of history — which, by the way, does not give the above details — is worse than the traditions. And the criticism of interpolation which he has levelled against the traditions must be directed against history also.

So far as the Qur'ān is concerned, it does not support any of his assertions. On the other hand, it plainly contradicted what he has said and refutes what he has fabricated. The 96th chapter (*Read in the name of Thy Lord ...*) *is* the first one revealed, as has been described by the traditions and is proved by the meaning of the first five verses; and nobody has said that this chapter was revealed piecemeal, (at least there is a likelihood that the whole chapter was revealed all together). Now, this chapter clearly shows that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to pray in the presence of the Meccans, some of whom forbade him to do so and talked about him their gatherings. (We do not know the method of the prayer which the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) performed in the beginning of his Call to be nearer to Allāh, except that this chapter mentions prostration.) Look at these verses of this chapter: *Did you see him who forbids a Servant* (of Allāh) *when he prays? Have you considered if he* (the Servant) *were on the Guidance or enjoined guarding* (against evil)? *Have you considered if he* (the unbeliever) *gives the lie* (to the truth) *and turns* (his) *back? Did he not know that Allāh does see? Nay! If he desist not, We will certainly smite his forehead; a lying sinful forehead. Then let him summon his council; We too will summon the tormentors of Hell. Nay! Obey him not, and prostrate and draw nigh* (to Allāh) (95:9—19). These verses show that there was someone who used to

forbid a worshipper to pray, and used to mention this matter in his council and did not desist from his deed; and obviously the one who used to pray was the Prophet himself (s.a.w.a.), especially as Allāh directly addresses him in the last verse, *Obey him not, and prostrate and draw nigh* (to Allāh). This chapter, therefore, proves that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to pray even before the revelation of the first chapter of the Qur'ān, and was a Guidance, and enjoined piety and guarding against evil. In other words, his work at that time consisted of prophethood and was not just a warning. In short, even before the Qur'ān was revealed, and the chapter of *the Opening* sent down to Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), and even before he was told to start his Call, he was a prophet and used to pray.

So far as the chapter of *the Opening* is concerned, it was revealed some time after the beginning of the Call. Had there been any truth in the assertion of the above writer that it was revealed just after the 94th chapter because ''it came into the Prophet's mind to ask Jibrīl how to remember Allāh'', it would have begun with the word say (*qul,* قل): *Say, in the name of Allāh* ... or *Say, all praise belongs to Allāh ... ;* and would have ended at the words, *Master of the Day of Judgement,* because the last three verses have no relation with that supposed question, and it is not the style of the Qur'ān to indulge in unnecessary talk. Of course, a verse in the 15th chapter (al-Hijr) says "*And certainly We have given you seven oft-repeated* (verses) *and the great Qur'ān."* (15-87) This chapter is of Meccan period as its subject matter shows. *Seven oft-repeated verses* means the chapter of *the Opening,* and it has been mentioned here side by side with the Qur'ān, which shows its greatness and excellence. Yet it was not counted as the *Qur'ān,* but only as *seven of its oft-repeated verses,* and only one of its parts. For further proof see 39:23 where the Qur'ān has been given the adjective, ''oft-repeated'': *Allāh has revealed the best discourse, a Book conforming in its various parts, oft-repeated* ... Thus, the Qur'ān is ''oft-repeated'' and the chapter of *the Opening is* only *seven of its verses.*

The 15th chapter mentions the 1st chapter (the Opening). It proves that the 1st chapter was revealed before the 15th. And the 15th chapter contains the verses; *Therefore, declare openly what you are bidden and turn aside from the polytheists. Surely, We will suffice you against the scoffers.* (15:94—95) These verses show that the Messenger of Allāh had

refrained from openly warning for a time and then was told to start it again by the words, *declare openly.*

Now let us look at the 74th chapter (the Shrouded) and its 2nd verse, *Arise, and warn. If* this chapter was revealed all together, then this verse has the same implication as the verse *declare openly what you are bidden* (15:94) because this chapter contains the following verses: *Leave Me and him whom I created alone and gaven him vast riches ... Then he turned back and was big with pride and, then he said, this is naught but an enchantment narrated* …. (74:11-25) This subject matter is similar to 15:94which says *and turn aside from the polytheists.* And if it was revealed piecemeal, then the context says that at least the verses in its beginning were revealed in the early days of the Call, after the Prophet had refrained from an open warning for some time.

Thirdly: He asserts that those traditions are forged and mythological which say that the Qur'ān was sent down on the Night of Destiny from the Preserved Tablet to the Inhabited House all together before the beginning of the prophethoot and then its verses were revealed in segments to the Messenger of Allāh. He says that they are against the Book of Allāh and their meaning is not correct. He claims that the Preserved Tablet means the Natural World and the Inhabited House means the Earth. Well, all the above claims are incorrect and a complete lie:

First, because no clear verse of the Qur'ān goes against these traditions as has been explained earlier.

Second, because nowhere in these traditions has it been said that the Qur'ān was sent down to the Inhabited House *before the beginning of the prophethood.* This clause has been added by the said writer without any basis.

Third: His assertion that the Preserved Tablet means the natural world (i.e. the universe) is a very ugly interpretation; nay, rather it is a laughing-stock. Can he explain what is the basis of naming this universe — in the word of Allāh — as 'the Preserved Tablet'? Is this because this universe is free from change and alteration? But it is a world of movement, always in a state of fluidity, always changing its quality. Or is it because this universe is safe from physical deterioration? But the facts belie such a claim. Or is it because undeserving persons cannot have any knowledge of it (as Allāh says in 56:77-79*, Most surely it is an*

honoured Qur'ān, in a book that is protected; *none shall touch it save the purified ones*)? But the knowledge of the universe is not restricted to any one group.

In short, that writer did not produce any interpretation, concerning the revelation of Qur'ān in the month of Ramaḍān, which could be in accord with the words of the verse. His interpretation boils down to this: The words, *in it was sent down the Qur'ān,* mean ''it is as though in it was sent down the Qur'ān.'' And the words, *Surely We revealed it in the Night of Destiny.* mean ''It is as though We revealed it in the Night of Destiny.'' Any such interpretation cannot be tolerated by language, usage and context.

Further, that writer says that the whole Qur'ān was revealed to the Messenger of Allāh in the Night of Destiny because he was given in that night the chapter of the *Opening* which contains all the important knowledge of the Qur'ān. Well why cannot others say that the revelation of the Qur'ān all at one time means that all its knowledge was sent down to the heart of the Messenger of Allāh in that night? There is nothing to contradict this interpretation.

There are many other fabrications and lies in that writing but this is not the place to go into a detailed refutation of it.

Qur'ān: *a guidance for the people and clear evidence of guidance and discrimination* (between right and wrong): ''People'' generally refers to the lowest category of mankind whose intelligence is not high. This word is generally used in the Qur'ān with this very implication. For example, *but most people do not know* (30:30); *And these examples, We set them forth for the people and none understand them but the learned.* (29:43) This word generally refers to the people who just follow what others say; they cannot understand abstract ideas even with the help of evidence and proof; they cannot discriminate between right and wrong through any argument; they need someone to explain ideals and a guide to lead them to the right path. And the Qur'ān is a guidance for these people; and what an ideal guidance it is!! Then comes the special group which is perfect both in knowledge and deeds, ready to receive the light of divine guidance, and may be relied upon to discriminate between right and wrong. For such people, the Qur'ān is the clear evidence and proof of guidance and discrimination. It leads them to the guidance and chooses right for them and shows them how to

discriminate between good and evil, right and wrong. Allāh says: *Whereby Allāh guides him, who follows His pleasure, into the ways of peace and takes them out from darkness towards the light by His will and guides them unto the path that is straight.* (5:16)

From the above discourse one may understand why Allāh has used here two words ‘‘guidance’’ and ‘‘clear evidence of guidance’’. The relation between the two is that of general and particular. The Qur’ān is guidance for one group and clear evidence of guidance for another.

Qur’ān: *so whosoever of you witnesses the month, he shall fast therein.*

Shahādah (witnessing, الشّهادة) means ‘presence’ by which one acquires knowledge. Witnessing the month means arrival of the month and the knowledge of its arrival.

Some people say that witnessing of the month means sighting of the new moon, and not on journey. But there is no evidence to support. this interpretation. Of course, sometimes the context implies such a meaning; but there is no such context in this verse.

Qur’ān: *and whosoever is sick or on a journey* (he shall fast) *the same number of other days*: This sentence has been repeated here. But this repetition is not for emphasis. It was explained earlier that the first two verses did not promulgate any law; rather they paved the way for such promulgation and prepared the minds to accept and follow the law which was to be shortly announced. It is in this third verse in which that law has been promulgated. As the aim of the first sentences is different from this one, there is, in fact, no repetition.

Qur’ān: *Allāh desires ease for you and He desires not hardship for you; and so that you may complete the* (prescribed) *number*: It is the explanation of the above mentioned exception. A sick person or a traveller has to break his fast because *Allāh desires ease for you,* and he shall fast the same number in other days *so that you may complete the prescribed number.*

So that ‘‘*L…*’’ (ل ; so that) in ‘so that you may complete the number’’ (*litukmilu ’l-‘iddah* ,.لتكملوا العدّة)gives the meaning of cause, and it is governed by the verb ‘‘desires’’. Therefore, its meaning will be: We ordered you to break the fast (under certain conditions) and repay it in other days to lighten your burden and to complete the prescribed number.

Qur'ān: *and that you glorify Allāh for his guiding you, and so that you may be thankful to Him*: Apparently, these two sentences, the first of which begins with 'so that' (*L ... ,ل*) for a 'cause', give the reason of the fast, and not of the exception and exemption. The words *the month of Ramaḍān* are followed by the description of the revelation of the Qur'ān in this month. And it indicates that there is a connection between the promulgation of the fast of the month of Ramadān and the revelation of the Qur'ān in it as a guidance for the people and a clear evidence of guidance and discrimination between right and wrong. Therefore, the ''so that'' (L... ,ل) points out that keeping the fast is meant to glorify Allāh because He revealed the Qur'ān for them and announced His Lordship and the people's servitude. Also it is a thanks to Him since He guided them unto the truth and gave them a Book which discriminates for them between right and wrong.

There is a difference between thanking Allāh by fasting and glorifying Him through it. A fast can be said to be a thanks to Allāh only when it contains the real spirit of the fast. What is the real spirit of the fast? To be sincere towards Allāh by purifying oneself from material involvement and abstaining from the greatest desires of the heart.

But glorifying Him does not depend on that real spirit. The form of the fast and mere abstaining from those things which break the fast (whether it is done with sincere intention or not) shows the glory of Allāh and His greatness, as the man is following His command with such self-denial.

Keeping in view this difference, Allāh has differentiated between glorifying and thanking: Thanking has been prescribed with ''لعلّ''(*la'alla*) which literally means 'perhaps' and is used to indicate hope, while glorifying has begun with ''so that'' (L, ل) which indicates cause. And thus we find *and that you glorify Allāh...and so that you may be thankful to Him.* It is the same style which is used at the end of the first of these verses so that you may guard yourselves...

TRADITIONS

al-Ḥadīth al-Qudsī: Allāh said, ''The fast is for Me and I shall give its reward.'' (or, ''I shall be its reward'')

Explanation: This *ḥadīth* has been narrated by both groups (i.e. Sunnī and Shī‘ah) with slight variations. Why has the fast been declared to be for Allāh? Because it is the only act of worship which consists of a negative aspect only, for example, not eating, not drinking, etc., while all other acts of worship, like prayer and pilgrimage etc., consist of positive actions or are made up of positive and negative aspects. The positive actions cannot be absolutely pure in showing the worshipper’s spirit of servitude or the Lordship of Almighty Allāh. It cannot be free of materialistic imperfections and limitations, and sometimes it may be done to please someone other than Allāh (as in the case of hypocrisy and showiness). But the fast is an act of worship in which one has just to abstain from lust and desire and restrain oneself from worldly matters. This negative aspect is a thing which nobody can know except Allāh. It is a dealing entirely between the servant and his Lord, and therefore this worship is purely for Allāh; others can have no share in it.

‘‘I shall give its reward’’ can also be translated ‘‘I shall be its reward’’. If the former, then it means that Allāh Himself will give its reward directly and will not make anyone a link between Himself and His servant. The servant worshipped Him in a way that nobody knew but Allāh, so he will be given its reward in a way that nobody will know it but Allāh.

It is like the *ḥadīth* about alms: ‘‘Verily alms, Allāh takes it Himself without making anyone a link in it. Allāh said, *Do they not know that Allāh ... takes the alms.* (9:105)

If the second translation is correct, then it indicates that the reward of the one who fasts is nearer to Allāh.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh, in the early days of his prophethood, used to fast continuously so that people would think that he would not leave a single day’s fast, and then to leave the fast continuously so that they would say he would not fast again. Then he changed this regime and began fasting on alternate days, and this was the fast of Dāwūd. Then he changed it and started fasting three bright days (i.e., 13th, 14th and 15th of the lunar month when the moonlight is the brightest.) Then again he divided the three days — one day each in every ten days, the first and last Thursdays and the Wednesday in the middle. And he continued with this regime till he left this world.’’ [*al-Kāfī*]

And there is *a ḥadīth* from ‘Anbasah al-‘Ābid that when the Messenger of Allāh died it was his custom to fast in Sha‘bān and Ramaḍān and three days in every month.

The author says: There are numerous traditions about it from *Ahlu ’l-bayt* ; and this is the *sunnah* fast which the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to keep in addition to the fast of Ramaḍān.

There is a *ḥadīth* in *Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyāshī under the words of Allāh, *O ye who believe! Fasting has been prescribed for you,* from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that ‘‘It is for the believers only’’.

Jamīl asked aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the words of Allāh *O ye who believe! Fighting has been prescribed for you,* and *O ye who believe! Fasting has been prescribed on you.* The Imām replied: ‘‘All such verses cover (even) those who have gone astray as well as the hypocrites, and (in short) everyone who accepted the declared Call (i.e. Islam).’’

Ḥafṣ said: ‘‘I heard Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) say: ‘Verily the month of Ramadān, Allāh did not prescribe its fast for any of the people before us.’ I asked: ‘Then (what is the meaning of) the word of Allāh: *0 ye who believe! Fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you?’* (The Imām) said: ‘Verily Allāh prescribed the month of Ramaḍān for the prophets, not for their peoples. Thus Allāh honoured this *ummah* and prescribed its fast for the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) as well as for this *ummah.’’* [*Man lā yaḥḍuruhu ’l faqīh*]

The author says: This *ḥadīth is* weak because there is Ismā‘īl ibn Muḥammad in its chain of narrators. The same thing is narrated from al-‘Ālim i.e. al-Kāẓim (a.s.), and probably both traditions are one and the same. In any case, this is a solitary tradition (*khabaru ’l-wāḥid*, الخبرالواحد — a tradition which is not narrated by a great enough number of narrators as to create a certainty of its truth). The obvious meaning of the verses does not support the view that ‘‘as it was prescribed for those before you’’ refers to the prophets only. Had it been the case (and we know that this sentence has been revealed to encourage the believers to fast, to prepare them for it and to exhort them), then it would have served the purpose better if the word, ‘prophets’, had been clearly mentioned, as it would have been more effective. And Allāh knows better.

There is a tradition from a man who asked aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) whether the Qur’ān and furqān are two things or one. (The Imām) said: ‘‘Qur’ān is the complete Book and Furqān is the obligatory law.’’ [*al-Kāfī*]

A ḥadīth from the same Imām (a.s.) says: ‘‘Furqān is every clear verse of the Book.’’ [*Jawāmi ‘u ’l- jāmi ‘*]

The same Imām (a.s.) said: ‘‘Furqān is every clear law in the Qur’ān and the Book is the complete Qur’ān which vouches for the previous prohets.’’ [*at-Tafsīr,* al-‘Ayyāshī and al-Qummī]

The author says: This interpretation is supported by the literal meaning of the word.

It has been said in some traditions that Ramaḍān is one of the names of Allāh ; therefore, one should not say ‘Ramaḍān came’ or ‘Ramaḍān went away’; but should say ‘the month of Ramaḍān …’ But it is a solitary tradition and is unusual. This saying has been reported also from Qatādah from among the commentators of the Qur’ān. But the traditions which count the names of Allāh do not mention Ramaḍān as one of His names. And the use of the word Ramaḍān without the word ‘‘month’’ as well as its dual form ‘‘Ramaḍānān’’(two Ramaḍāns) is very common in the traditions narrated from the Prophet and the Imāms of *Ahlu ’l-bayt* (a.s.) This usage is very common; and it cannot be said that a particular narrator might have omitted the word ‘month’ by mistake.

aṣ-Ṣabāḥ ibn Nubātah said: ‘‘I told Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) that Ibn Abī Ya‘fūr told me to ask you some questions. The Imām said: ‘And what are those?’ I said: ‘He asks you, if the month of Ramaḍān enters and one is in his house, is he allowed to go on a journey?’ The Imām said: ‘Verily Allāh says *so whosoever of you witnesses the month, he shall fast therein.* Therefore, anyone who is in his house when the month of Ramaḍān enters is not allowed to travel except for *ḥajj* or *‘umrah* or in search of such goods which are in danger of being lost.’ ’’ [al-‘Ayyāshī]

The author says: It is a fine inference of a non-obligatory law based on the generality of the words.

‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (a.s.) said: ‘‘And as regards the fast of a journey and sickness, the Sunnīs (*‘āmmah,* العامّة) have conflicting views: a group says, he shall fast; others say, he shall not fast ; still others opine, he will fast if he so wishes, and shall leave it if so desires. But we say, he shall leave the fast in both conditions. And if he fasted while on journey or during illness then on him is its repayment, i.e. he must fast the same number on other days, because Allāh says, *But whoso among you be sick or on a journey, then* (he shall fast) *the sane number of other days.’’* [*al-Kāfī*]

The author says: al-‘Ayyāshī also has narrated this tradition.

And there is in the same *Tafsīr* (under the word of Allāh, *so whosoever of you witnesses the month ...*) a tradition of al-Bāqir (a.s.) in which the Imām said: How clear is this verse for him who understands — He who is present in Ramaḍān shall fast, and he who is on a journey during it shall break the fast.

The author says: There are numerous traditions of the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* that it is incumbent on the sick and the traveller to break the fast; and the same is their *madhhab.* Also, you have seen that the verse of the Qur'ān clearly proves the same.

Abū Baṣīr said: ' ' I asked him (the Imām — a.s.) about the words of Allāh and those who are hardly able to do so, on them is a redemption by feeding a poor man. The Imām said: 'The aged man who is not able (to fast) and the sick.' '' [al-'Ayyāshī]

Imām al-Baqīr (a.s.) is reported to have said about that verse: ''The aged man, and the one who has a sickness in which he is always thirsty.'' [*ibid.*]

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) is reported to have said in explanation of that verse: ''The woman who is afraid for her child and the aged man.'' [*ibid.*]

The author says: There are numerous traditions from the Imāms to this effect. And the ''sick'' mentioned in the tradition of Abū Basīr (mentioned above) means that sick person whose illness continues the whole year till the next Ramaḍān comes ; such a sick person will not be required to fast the same number of other days.

Sa'īd said that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''Verily, there is *takbīr* (*Allāhu akbar*) on the day of 'Idu '1-fiṭr. I said: 'There is no *takbīr* except in 'Idu '1-Aḍḥā.' The Imām said: 'There is *takbīr* on that day ; but it is *sunnah* in prayers of sunset, nightfall, dawn, noon and afternoon and in the two *rak'ats of 'īd.*' '' [al-'Ayyāshī]

Sa'īd an-Naqqāsh said: ''Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) told me, 'There is *takbīr* on the eve of 'Īdu 'l-fiṭr but it is *sunnah*. I asked him; 'And when it is?'He said: 'In the prayer of sunset, nightfall on the eve of 'Idu 'l -fiṭr and in the prayers of dawn and 'īd. Then it is discontinued.' I asked him: 'How should I say it?' He said: 'You say

الله اكبر لا اله الّا الله و الله اكبر الله اكبر على ما هدانا

(*Allāhu akbar Allāhu akbar lāillāha illa'llāhu wa'llāhu a kbar Allāhu akbaru 'alā mā hadānā*) — and it is the meaning of the words of Allāh, *so that you shall complete the number* (i.e. prayer) *and that you glorify Allāh for His*

guiding you. And the glorifying (*takbīr,*التكبير) is that you say: الله اكبر لا اله الّا الله و الله اكبر و لله الحمد (*Allāhu akbar, lā illāha illa'llāh u wa'llāhu akbar wa lillāhi 'l-ḥamd*).*'* And he said: 'In a tradition the last *takbir is* four times.''' [*al-Kāfī*]

The author says: The first tradition includes prayers of noon and afternoon in glorifying (*takbīr,* التّكبير) and the last oneomits them. This difference may be an indication of the difference in the degrees of *sunnah.* And the word of the Imām, ''i.e. prayer'', perhaps indicate that the words of Allāh, *so that you shall complete the number,* meand 'complete the number of the days of fast with the prayer of 'īd and glorify Allāh with prayers for His guiding you'. This meaning is not against the meaning which we described earlier because it is an inference of a non-obligatory rule from a sentence containing an obligatory law. It is like the tradition quoted earlier in which the Imām inferred from the verse, *so whosoever of you witnesses the month he shall fast therein* the undesirability of travel when one is in his abode on the first night.

The tradition has two different methods of *takbīr.* This difference supports the opinion of some writers that glorifying in ''that you glorify Allāh'' includes praising also, and that is why it is followed in this verse by the preposition on (*'alā*, على) which is the preposition generally used after praise (*al-ḥamd,* , الحمد)

Ibn Abī 'Umayr said that he asked aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.): ''May I be your ransom! Is it correct what we are told, that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) fasted for twenty-nine days much more than he fasted for thirty days? He (the Imām) said: 'Allāh did nto create a single letter of this talk. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) did not fast but thirty days, because Allāh says: *You shall complete the number.* Was the Messenger of Allāh shortening it?' '' [al-'Ayyāshī]

The author says: This question is for repudiation. The tradition shows what we have already mentioned that completing herer means completing the month of Ramaḍān.

One of our companions narrates about the words of Allāh, *so that you glorify Allāh for His guiding you,* that glorifying means 'extolling'and guidance means 'friendship of the Imāms' (*wilāyah ,* الولاية). [*al Maḥāsin*]

The author says: The interpretation of guidance as friendship of

the Imām is like explaining an idea by giving a clear example. Also, it may be treated as its inner meaning. It is as has been mentioned in some traditions that in the verse: *Allāh desires ease for you and He desires not hardship for you,* 'ease' means friendship (of the Imāms) and 'hardship' means their enmity and friendship with enemies of Allāh.

Ḥafṣ ibn al-Ghiyāth asked Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about the words of Allāh *the month of Ramaḍān in which was sent down the Qur'ān,* when (the fact is that) the Qur'ān was sent down twenty years from its beginning to its end. Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) said: ''The Qur'ān came all together in the month of Ramaḍān down to the 'Inhabited House'; then it came down (in segments) in a period of twenty years.'' Then the Imām said: ''The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: 'The book of Ibrāhīm came down in the first night of the month of Ramaḍān, and the Torah was sent down on the sixth of the month of Ramaḍān, and the Zabūr was sent down on the eighteenth of the month of Ramaḍān and the Qur'ān was sent down on the twenty-third of the month of Ramaḍān.' '' [*al-Kāfī*]

The author says: The tradition of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) narrated by the Imām (a.s.) has been narrated by as-Suyūṭī in *ad-Durru 'l-man thūr,* with several chains from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) through Wāthilah ibn al-Asqa'.

Ya'qūb said ; ' ' I heard a man asking Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about the Night of Destiny, whether it occurred (once only) or it comes every year. Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) said: 'If the Night of Destiny were taken away the Qur'ān would be taken away.' '' [*al-Kāfī* and *Man lā yaḥḍurruhu 'l faqīh*]

Ibn 'Abbās said: ''The month of Ramaḍān and the Blessed Night and the Night of Destiny ; because verily the Night of Destiny is the Blessed Night and it is in Ramaḍān. The Qur'ān came down all together from reminder (*dhikr ,* الذكر) to the Inhabited House and it is the falling place of the stars in the lowest heaven where the Qur'ān came down. Later it descended on Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) piecemeal, about order, prohibition, and in battles.' '' [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

The author says: This matter has also been narrated by others, like Sa'īd ibn Jubayr. And it appears from this talk of Ibn 'Abbās that he inferred it from the Qur'ānic verses ; for example the words of Allāh: *and the wise reminder* (3:58), *And* (I swear by) *the Book written in an*

outstretched fine parchment and the inhabited house and the elevated canopy (52:2—5); *But nay! I swear by the falling of stars, and most certainly it is a great oath if you only know, most surely it is an honoured Qur'ān in a Book that is hidden ; none shall touch it save the purified ones* (56:75—79) ; *and We adorned the lowest heaven with lamps* (stars) *and* (made it) *to guard* (41:12) And all His words are clear except what He said about the place of falling, that it is the lowest heaven and is the place of the Qur'ān. The meaning of this assertion is obscure and the verses of the 56th chapter do not clearly show it. Of course ; it is narrated from *Ahlu 'l-bayt* that the Inhabited House is in heaven, and we shall explain it, God willing, in its proper place.

What should clearly be understood is that traditions are like the Qur'ān, because there are, in traditions also, some clear ones and others ambiguous. One very commonly finds in their talks which are based on hints and symbols, and especially so in the explanation of such facts as the Tablet, the Pen, the Curtain, the Heaven, the Inhabited House, the Swollen Sea etc. Therefore, it is obligatory for a research scholar to strive his utmost to find out if there is any hint or context to determine the true meaning of a given text.

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ ٱلدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ - ١٨٦ .

And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then verily I am near, I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls on Me, so they should answer My call and believe in Me, so that they may walk in the right way. (2:186)

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *And when My servants ask. you concerning Me, then verily I am near, I answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls on Me.* This is the best expression of the subject matter in the most elegant and beautiful style. The whole verse is based on the first person singular pronoun which shows the great importance which the speaker, i.e. Allāh attaches to this subject ; then come the words *My servants* and not ''people'' or such other words ; and this enhances its importance even more ; the reply (*then verily I am near*) starts dramatically just after the question without any preamble like: ''then say that I am near''; and the reply has been emphasized with ''verily'' (*inna* انّ) ; and the nearness of the speaker is described with the adjective *near* and not with any verb like ''I come near him'', thus it shows that He is already near and will always remain near ; then it mentions answering the prayer with the verb the *muḍāri'* (المضارع = aorist tense) which combines both the present and the future tenses; and indicates that He answers at present and will continue to answer the prayers of the supplicant ; then the answer (I answer the prayer of the supplicant) is conditioned with *when he calls on Me,* but in reality it is not a condition separate from the main n'ause, both are one and the same thing, and it serves to emphasize that the prayer of the supplicant is answered without any condition or stipulation (as we see also in the verse: *call on Me, I will answer you* 40:60). These seven points show how much importance has been attached to the answering of prayers. In addition, this verse — short as it is — repeats the first person singular pronoun seven times ; it is the only verse with this characteristic in the whole of Qur'ān.

''Du'ā'' and *''da'wah''* (call, الدعآء and الدّعوة) mean to turn the attention of the called one to the caller. Asking (*su 'āl,* السّوال) means to gain a benefit or advantage from the one whose attention is drawn towards the asker and before whom his (asker's) need is put. Therefore, asking (*su'āl,* السّوال) is the final aim of calling (*du'ā',* الدعآء). This meaning covers all types of asking, for example, asking for the removal of ignorance, asking with the meaning of reckoning, asking in the sense of seeking beneficence.

Literally, ''bondage'' (*'ubūdiyyah,* العبودية), as explained earlier, is the status of being owned. It is not used for any other owned thing except human beings. Therefore, ''servant'' (*'abd,* العبد) is used only for a human being or another intelligent being (like an angel).

The ownership of Allāh is as different from the ownership of others as is the truth from pretence or the reality from metaphor. Allāh owns His servants ; His ownership is total and comprehensive. They have no authority, independent from Allāh, over their own selves or over matters or things which are subordinate to them ; for example, their attributes and actions and all things which are related to them, like wives, children, property, honour etc. Everything which they own and is related to them in any way — as we say, his self, his body, his ears, his eyes, his actions, his impression (and these are a sort of natural and real possessions), or as we say, his spouse, his wealth, his honour, his right — (and these are a sort of supposed or assumed possession) — is in his possession only because Allāh allowed the establishment of that relation of ownership between man and his possession, whatever it may be. It is Allāh, glorified be His name, who gave their selves and their persons to them — and if He did not wish so, it could not be attributed to them and they would have remained without any self or person — in other words, non-existent. It is He who gave them hearing and sight and hearts ; and it is He who created everything, then fixed for it a measure.

Therefore, Allāh intervenes between a thing and its self, between it and between all its associates like child, spouse, friend, property, honour and rights. It means that He is the nearest of all to His creatures. In other words, He is the Near One in the true sense of this word. He has said: *And We are nearer to him than you, but you see* (Us) *not* (56:85); *and We are nearer to him than his life vein* (50:16) ; *and know that Allāh intervenes between man and his heart* (8:24). 'Heart'

here means the rational soul or spirit.

In short, Allāh's ownership of His creatures is real ownership, and as they are His servants He is near to them in its true sense, which means nearest of all things. This ownership gives Him authority to make use of them as He wishes, without any hindrance or obstruction. Also it gives Him authority to answer any prayer which is put before Him by any of His creatures, and to fulfil his need by accepting his supplication, because the ownership is all encompassing, and His Power and pervasiveness cover all possible situations. It is not as though He has authority in one eventuality and not in the other, as the Jews say that when God created things and decreed their destinies, His work was finished and now His hands are folded up, He can not take any new decision ; there is no abrogation (of previous laws), no change and no answering of prayer because every affair is already finished. Nor is it, as a group of this *ummah* said, that Allāh has no power about the actions of His creatures. They are called Qadariyyah and were named the Magians of this *ummah* by the Messenger of Allāh. Sunnīs and Shī'ahs both have reported that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ''Qadariyyah are the Magians of this *ummah''.*

The truth is that real ownership in its totality is by Allāh only and nobody owns any thing but when He makes him its owner and allows him to possess it. Therefore, whatever Allāh wills and gives in possession and allows its coming into being, comes into being. And whatever He does not will, and does not give in possession and does not allow, does not come into being, even if one strives his utmost to bring it into being. Allāh has said: *0 people! You are they who are needy unto Allāh, and Allāh is He who is the Self-sufficient, the Most Praised One*. (35:15)

It is, thus, clear that this verse not only mentions a fact, i.e., answering prayer, but gives its reasons also: Because the supplicants are servants of Allāh, He is near to them ; and because He is near to them, He answers their prayers without any reservation. And the unconditional answering of prayer means that there is no condition imposed on prayer also ; whatever prayer is addressed to Him, He shall answer it. Of course, it seems that His promise 'I answer the prayer of the supplicant' depends on the condition, *when he calls Me.* But this condition is not something different from the main clause ; and such a mode of expression indicates

that the main clause is free from metaphor and analogy ; that its meaning is what appears from the words. For example, when we say, ''Listen to the sincere advisor when he sincerely advises you'', or ''Respect the scholar if he be a scholar'', it means that we want him to be sure that the advisor is really sincere or the scholar is really a scholar so that listening to him or respecting him becomes necessary. In the same way, the condition *when he calls on me* shows that the promise of answering the prayer shall apply when the supplicant is a supplicant in reality ; when he wants that thing according to his natural and deep ingrained knowledge and when his heart is really in what his tongue is asking for. The reality of prayer and supplication is what the heart decries and the tongue of nature asks for, not this tongue of flesh which moves as it is moved without caring whether the word spoken is a truth or a lie, a reality or a metaphor, a serious talk or a joke. It is because of this that Allāh has even mentioned such prayers in which the tongue is not used at all. He said: *And He gave you of all that you asked Him ; and if you count Allāh's bounties, you will not be able to compute them* ; *Verily, man is very unjust very ungrateful* (14:34). Mankind prays to Him and beseeches Him for bounties which they cannot count, but this asking is not done by the tongue of the mouth, it is done by the tongue of their neediness, the tongue of nature and existence. Also He said: *All those in the heavens and the earth do beseech Him* ; *every day He is in a* (new) *splendor* (55:29). This verse more clearly proves what we have just said.

Therefore, the natural prayer addressed to Allāh shall always be answered. If a prayer is not answered then it lacks both or one of the two things mentioned in the verse: *the prayer of the supplicant when he calls on Me.* It may happen in following ways:

First: There may be no prayer at all, it may only be a misunderstanding of the supplicant. For example, a man prays for an impossible thing (but he does not know that it is impossible), or for a thing which, if he knew the fact, would not have wanted at all. Let us say that someone was sick and died but his friend is unaware of his death and prays for his recovery, while now the prayer should be for bringing him back to life. If he had been really sure that a dead body could be resurrected and had asked for its resurrection (as the prophets did) his life would have been returned to him ; but he does not have such firm conviction and therefore the prayer is not answered. Or, let us

say, he asks for a thing which, had he known it really, he would not have wanted. Therefore, it is not granted.

Second: There is indeed a prayer, but it is not addressed exclusively to Allāh. For example, a man beseeches Allāh for his needs, but his heart is looking towards its apparent causes or to some imaginary beings whom he thinks have power to fulfil his needs. In this case, his prayer is not addressed exclusively to Allāh. In other words, he did not beseech Allāh at all; because Allāh, Who answers the prayers, is the One who has no partner in His affairs. He is not the one who works in partnership with apparent causes and imaginary beings.

So these are the two groups of supplicants whose hearts were not sincere in their prayers even if their tongues were.

This is the gist of the subject of prayer according to the verse of the Qur'ān. The meaning of all verses on this subject may be understood from this explanation. See, for example, the following verses:

> *Say, my Lord would not care for you, were it not for your prayer; but you have indeed rejected* (the truth), *so soon you shall be in the grip* (25:77).
>
> *Say, think you that if the chastisement of Allāh comes to you or the Hour comes to you, will you call upon other than Allāh, if you are truthful[Nay! Him you will call upon, so He clears away that for which you pray, if He pleases, and you will forget what you set up* (with Him) (6:40-41).
>
> *Say, who is it that delivers you from the* (dread of the) *darkness of the land and the sea* (when) *you pray to him* (openly) *humiliating yourselves and secretly: ''If He delivers us from this, certainly we shall be of the grateful ones''. Say, Allāh delivers you from them and from every distress, yet again you associate* (others) *with Him* (6:63-64).

These verses prove that man has been created with a natural prayer and inborn request, which is silently addressed to his Lord. But when he spends his life in ease and prosperity, his soul becomes blinded by apparent causes and he treats them as partners to his Lord ; thus he becomes confused and thinks that he does not ask his Lord for anything and does not beseech Him, while the fact is that he does not beseech anyone other than Allāh, because this prayer (to Allāh) is ingrained into his nature, and there is no change in the creation of Allāh. Later comes

the hardship and the apparent causes become divorced from the expected effects, and those whom he treated as partners of Allāh or intercessors before Him disappear completely ; then he realizes that there is no one to fulfil his needs and to answer his prayers except Allāh. Thus, he returns to his natural monotheism and forgets every other cause and turns his face towards the Beneficent Lord ; and the Lord clears away his hardship and fulfils his wants and places him under the shade of opulence. But as soon as he regains his prosperity and happiness he goes back to the previous polytheism and forgetfulness.

And your Lord said: Call upon Me, I will answer you. Verily, those who are arrogant to My *worship shall soon enter Hell, disgraced* (40:60).

This verse invites mankind to beseech Allāh, and promises the answering, and goes even further by naming the prayer as worship in the clause, *arrogant to My worship* which means ‘‘to my prayer’’. Rather, it equates the worship with prayer: it threatens with Hell those who do not pray, and such a threat can only be justified when one neglects worship completely, not on neglecting only one kind of it. Therefore, the prayer is not just an important type of worship ; it is the foundation of worship itself.

From the above, one may appreciate the meaning of other verses on this subject:

Therefore, call upon Allāh, being sincere to Him in religion, though averse be the disbelievers (40:14).

And call on Him fearing and hoping ; surely, the mercy of Allāh is near to those who do good (7:56).

... surely they used to ... call unto Us with love and reverence, and were humble before Us (21:90).

Call upon your Lord humbly and secretly ; surely He loves nots those who exceed the limit (7:55).

When called he (Zakariyyā) *unto his Lord in low voice. He said*: *My Lord! Surely my bones are weakened and my head flares with hoariness, and, my Lord! Never have I been unsuccessful in my prayer to Thee* (19:3-4).

And He answers those who believe and do good deeds, and increases unto them of His grace (42:26).

There are other relevant verses, and all of these contain the pillars of prayer and explain the manner of the supplication. And the most important of all is to keep the prayer exclusively for Allāh ; it will come true when the feeling of the heart conforms with the words spoken by the tongue ; when one abandons reliance on all apparent reasons other than Allāh and depends exclusively upon Allāh. Also among them are: fear of Allāh ; hope in His answering ;His love and reverence ; humility and humbleness ;as well as perseverance in prayer ; remembrance of Allāh ; good deeds; true faith ; presence of heart at that time ; and similar things.

Qur'ān: *So they should answer My call and believe in Me***.**

This sentence branches out from the previous one. Allāh is near to His servants ; nothings comes between Him and their prayer ; He cares for them and for the things they ask for ; that is why He invites them to call upon Him and He is of such high attributes. Therefore, they should accept this invitation of their Lord and should advance towards Him, and have faith in Him about this attribute, having firm belief that He is near and He answers their call ; so that they may be guided rightly in praying unto Him.

TRADITIONS

The Sunnīs and Shī'ahs both have narrated from the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that ''Prayer is the armament of the believer.''

It is narrated in *al-Ḥadīth al-qudsī*: ''O Mūsā! Ask from Me all that you need, even fodder for your goat and salt for your dough.'' [*'Uddatu'd-dā'ī*]

The Prophet said: ''Calling (upon Allāh) is better than reciting the Qur'ān, because Allāh (Powerful and Great is He!) said, 'Say, My Lord would not care for you were it not for your prayer.''' [*Makārimu 'l-akhlāq*]

The same *ḥadīth* has been narrated from al-Bāqir and aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.).

Muḥammad ibn 'Ajlān narrates from Muḥammad ibn 'Ubaydullāh ibn 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn from his cousin, aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) from his forefathers from the Prophet that he said: ''Allāh informed one of his prophets in a revelation: 'By My Power and Dignity! Verily I shall

change into despair the hope of everyone who hoped from other than Me, and I shall dress him with the clothing of disgrace before people, and I shall remove him from My relief and bounty. Does my servant put his hope in other than Me in hardships, while hardships are in My hand ; And does he expect anything from other than Me, while I am the Self-sufficient, the Munificent? In My hand are the keys of the doors, while they are closed ; and My door is open for the one who calls on Me . ..' '' [*'Uddatu 'd-dā'ī*

The Prophet said: ''Allāh said ; 'No creature seeks refuge in another creature, leaving Me, but that I cut off all the means in the heavens and the earth for him. Then if he asks from Me, I do not give him ; and if he calls on Me, I do not answer him. And no creature seeks refuge in Me, leaving My creatures, but that I make the heaven and the earth responsible for his sustenance ; then if he calls on Me, I answer him and, if he seeks pardon from Me, I forgive!''' [*ibid.*]

The author says: The aim of the above two traditions is to emphasize that the invocation must be purely for Allāh. It was not meant to negate the positive causes which Allāh has created as instrumental links between the things and their needs. But these instruments are not independent causes. The Independent Cause is only Allāh. And man does have an inner feeling of this fact: he feels by his nature that there is a Perfect Cause who fulfils his needs and who can never fail in bringing about the desired effect. On the other hand, he knows that all the apparent causes which are expected to produce an effect, some times fail to do so. Thus he knows that the First Cause, who is the Source and Origin of everything and upon whom every need relies and depends for its fulfilment, is other than these apparent causes. Once he realises it, he will never entirely rely on these causes, forgetting the Real Cause. Man may appreciate this fact after just a little thinking.

Now, if he prays for something and that need is fulfilled, it will prove that he asked his Lord for it, and that the prayer, which emanated from his inner feeling and knowledge, reached through the apparent causes to His Lord and was granted by Him. On the contrary, if he prays to some apparent causes for it, then it does not originate from natural inner feeling and knowledge ; it is just an imaginary need, based not on inner feeling but on some imaginary reasons. It is one of the situations where appearance goes against reality, because he thinks that he is praying,

while his inner self knows nothing about that prayer.

Another example: Many is the time that a man likes a thing and makes all efforts to get it ; but when he gets it, he finds that it is harmful to another thing which is far more important and far more dear than that thing. Then he leaves that which he had strived for and keeps that which is more important. Likewise, sometimes he dislikes a thing, but once it comes to him he finds it far more beneficial and far better than the alternative which he previously preferred. A child is sick ; when he is given a bitter medicine, he refuses to take it and starts crying. But at the same time he wants to regain his health. Now the position is this: his natural inner feeling prays for health and, therefore, for the medicine ; but his words and deeds reject the same medicine. Likewise, man, in his life, has a discipline based on natural understanding and inner feeling ; and he also has a system based on his imagination only. The natural discipline makes no mistake, it never leads astray ; while the imaginary discipline often goes wrong. It is clear from the example of the sick child that sometimes man asks for some thing urged by his imagination but in reality that very prayer is the prayer for its opposite.

This discourse will help the readers in understanding the meaning of the traditions, and it is also the implication of the words of ‘Alī (a.s.) which come later, ‘‘Verily, the granting (of Prayer) is according to the measure of the intention ...’’

The Prophet said: ‘‘Call upon Allāh and you can be confident for the answering.’’ [*‘Uddatu ’d-dā ‘ī*]

‘‘I am near the opinion (i.e. expectation) of My servant about Me ; so, he should not have any opinion about Me (i.e. should not expect from Me) except good.’’ [*al-Ḥadīth al-qudsī*]

The author says: It is because if one prays and at the same time is pessimistic or doubtful about its outcome, then it shows that the prayer is just a formality, the supplicant has no real intention of asking for it (see the previous explanation). And the traditions forbid asking for a thing which one is sure will not come about.

The Prophet said: ‘‘Resort to Allāh in your needs ; and seek refuge in Him in your misfortunes ; and humiliate yourselves before Him and beseech Him, because, verily, supplication is the essence of worship. And no believer calls upon Allāh but He answers him: either it is speeded up to him in this world, or is kept in reserve for him for the next one, or

his sins are forgiven in proportion to his supplication, provided he does not pray for a sinful thing.'' [*'Uddatu'd-dā'ī*]

'Alī (a.s.) wrote in his will for his son, al-Ḥusayn (a.s.): ''Then He placed the keys of His treasures in your hands in the sense that He allowed you to ask Him. Therefore, whenever you wish, you may get the doors of His bounties opened with prayer, and get the heavy rains of His Mercy to fall upon you. Delay in acceptance of the prayer should not disappoint you, because the granting (of prayer) is according to the measure of (your) intention. And sometimes, the answering of your prayer is delayed so that it brings a greater reward to the asker and a better granting to the expectant. Sometimes you ask for a thing and it is not given to you, but a better thing is given to you, immediately or later ; or a thing is diverted from you for some greater good for you, because often you ask for a thing which would have destroyed your religion had it been given to you. Therefore, your prayer should be for things whose beauty should last for you and whose evil should remain away from you. As for wealth, it will not last for you, nor will you last for it.'' [*Nahju 'l-balāghah*]

The author says: ''The granting (of prayer) is according to the measure of (your) intention.'' 'Alī (a.s.) means that the answer is given according to the call. The supplicant is granted whatever he asks for from Allāh with the firm conviction of his conscience and with his heart, and not what is asked for in words. As explained earlier, the words sometimes do not completely conform with the real requirement demanded by the nature. This sentence, therefore, shows in the most lucid and comprehensive way, the relationship between prayer and its answer. 'Alī (a.s.) has, in this writing, explained many cases in which it appears that the prayer was not granted, e.g. where there is delay in answering the call, or a material bounty is asked for but it is changed to some thing which is far better for him either in this world or in the next, or it is diverted to some thing more beneficial for the asker. The supplicant had, for example, asked for a pleasant bounty ; and if he were given it without delay it would not have been really appreciated and valued, and, therefore, its granting was delayed. In short, when he asked for a ''pleasant'' bounty, he implicitly asked for a delay in granting of the prayer. Likewise, a believer who seriously pays attention to his religion, prays for some thing which would be harmful to his religion,

although he does not know it and thinks that it would bring him happiness. But his happiness is in his religion and in the next world. Therefore, his prayer is in fact for the next world, not for this one, and, accordingly, it is granted for the next world, not for this one.

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said: ‘ ‘ A servant does not extend his hand towards Allāh, but that Allāh is ashamed to return it empty. He puts in it from His bounty and mercy whatever He wishes. So, when one of you calls (upon Allāh), he should not return his hand until he wipes it on his head and face.’’ [*‘Uddatu ’d-dā ‘ī*] In another *ḥadīth* it is ‘‘on his face and chest’’.

The author says: There are in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* eight similar traditions narrated by a number of the companions, like Salmān, Jābir, ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar, Anas ibn Mālik and Ibn Abī Mughīth from the Prophet ; and all of them mention raising of the hands in the prayer. Therefore, it is meaningless to reject raising of hands in the prayer as someone has done saying that ‘‘it is suggestive of the belief that Allāh has a body, because the raising of the hands towards the sky is an indication that He is there - Holy and Sanctified is He from it.’’

But this statement is wrong. All acts of worship performed by the body are in reality the heartfelt sense of gratitude and inner attention which is reduced to the level of symbolic appearance ; and the spiritual realities are demonstrated in the moulds of the body, as one may see in the *ṣalāt,* the fast, the *ḥajj,* etc., and their parts. and conditions. Had it not been so, there would not have been any justification for worship by the body. And invocation is such a form of worship. It is the attention of the heart and the inner supplication demonstrated by the symbol of the begging of a wretched pauper coming near a powerful and wealthy person, raising and extending his hands towards him and asking his needs from him, humiliating himself before him and imploring him to grant him his requirements. ash-Shaykh has reported in *al Majālis wa ’l-akhbār,* with his *sanad* (chain of narrators) from Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir (a.s.) and Zayd from their father, Imām ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn from his father al-Ḥusayn (a.s.) from the Prophet that ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) used to raise his hands when he prayed and beseeched (Allāh) as a pauper begs for food.’’ The same *ḥadīth* is written in *‘Uddatu ’d-dā‘ī* without *sanad.*

‘Alī (a.s.) heard a man saying ‘‘O Allāh! I seek refuge in Thee from

temptation.'' 'Alī(a.s.) said: ''I see, you are seeking refuge against your wealth and children. Allāh says: *Verily your wealth and your children are temptations* (8:28). *You* should rather say: O Allāh! I seek refuge in Thee from misleading temptations.'' [*Biḥāru 'l-anwār*]

The author says: It is another way of determining the meaning of a word. And there are many such examples in traditions. The fact is that the true meaning of every word is that for which it has been used by Allāh in His talk. And some examples of this are the traditions which explain the meaning of 'part', 'many'etc.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''Verily, Allāh does not answer the memorised prayer by a forgetful heart.'' [*'Uddatu 'd-dā'ī*]

'Alī (a.s.) said: ''Allāh does not accept the prayer of an inattentive heart.'' [*ibid.*]

The author says: There are other traditions with this meaning ; and the reason is that there is in reality no prayer and supplication with forgetfulness and inattention.

There is in the Torah: Allāh says to His servant, ''Verily, when you pray against one of my servants because he was unjust to you, then at the same time there may be another of my servants praying against you too because you were unjust to him. Now, if you so wish, I shall grant your prayer and also his prayer against you ; and if you so wish, I shall postpone the cases of both of you for the Day of Resurrection.'' [ar-Rāwandī, *ad-Da'wāt*]

The author says: If someone prays for something then it means that he is pleased with it and this pleasure naturally extends to all those things which are similar to it in all respects. He prays for punishment of his oppressor ; he prays against him because of his oppression and injustice. It means that he is pleased with the punishment of the unjust. Now, if he himself oppressed another person then the same prayer against his oppressor shall become a prayer against himself. If he is pleased that he himself should be punished (and he shall never be pleased with it), then he will be given the same punishment which he wanted for his oppressor. And if he is not pleased with it, then there is in reality no prayer at all. Allāh said : *And man prays for evil as he aught to pray for good, and man is ever hasty* (17:11).

The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said to Abū Dharr: ''O Abū Dharr! Should I not teach you some words by which Allāh will benefit you? I (Abū

Dharr) said: 'Surely! O Messenger of Allāh.' He said: 'Guard (the commands of) Allāh, (and) Allāh will guard you. Keep (the rememberance of) Allāh, (and) you will find Him before you. Make the acquaintance of Allāh in opulence, He will know you in hardship. And when you ask, ask from Allāh ; and when you seek help, seek help from Allāh, because whatever is to happen upto the Day of Resurrection has already been written, and if all the creatures together strived to benefit you with what Allāh did not write for you, they would not be able to do so.' '' [*'Uddatu'd-dā'ī*]

The author says: His words, ''Make the acquaintance of Allāh in opulence, He will know you in hardship'', mean ''Call upon Allāh in opulence and do not forget Him, so that He will answer your call in hardship and will not forget you.'' Anybody who forgets his Lord in opulence is as if he believes that the apparent causes are the total and real cause of his opulence. Then comes the hardship and he starts calling on his Lord. His action indicates that he believes in the Lordship of Allāh only when he is afflicted with hardship. But Allāh is not so. He is the Lord in every condition and every situation. Therefore, if he calls on a lord whose lordship is limited to the time of hardship only, he does not call on the True Lord.

This meaning has been explained in some traditions in a different language. aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''One who goes on calling (on his Lord) in advance, his call will be answered when there comes down an affliction (on him), and it will be said,'(it is) a known voice', and it will not be screened out of the heavens. And the one who does not call (on his Lord) in advance, his call is not answered when an affliction comes, and the angels say, 'It is a voice which we do not know…' ''[*Makārimu'l-akhlāq*]

And it is understood from the word of Allāh, *They forget Allāh, so He forgets them* (9:68). There is another tradition that *du'ā'* (prayer) is not rejected if one cuts oneself (from all apparent causes and turns exclusively towards Allāh). There is no contradiction between this tradition and those mentioned before, because affliction and hardship is something different from exclusively turning towards Allāh.

His words: *and when you ask, ask from Allāh, and when you seek help, seek help from Allāh.* It teaches one to adhere only to Allāh in reality while asking and seeking help ; because so far as these nominal causes, which we find in this world are concerned, their relation with their effects is confined within the limit set for it by Allāh. They are not

independent in producing the effect as it appears to un-informed eyes ; they are only a means to produce that effect ; the incumbent on the man to turn towards Allāh in all his needs, without relying on nominal causes and means, although Allāh has decreed not to produce an effect if its cause is missing. In short, the above sentence tells one not to rely on nominal causes and not to forget that it is Allāh who has made it a cause of that effect. It does not mean that one should neglect the causes and means and ask for one's needs without striving for its cause ; it would be rather asking for the impossible. One should realise that even the heart where the prayer originates, the tongue which utters the words of the prayer and the hands, etc., which are used in praying are but some of the causes and means. So, how can one escape from the apparent causes?

Let us look at the example of man himself. Whatever he does, is done with his limbs and organs: he gives with his hands, sees with his eyes and hears with his ears. Now, if one asked his Lord to fulfil his needs neglecting its causes and means, it would be as if he asked someone to give him something without using his hand, or to look at him without using his eyes or to listen to his pleas without using his ears.

On the other hand, if one relies on the nominal causes without remembering Allāh, it would be as though one thinks that it is the man's hand which gives, his eyes which see and his ears which hear, and forgets that the real doer of these actions is man himself. Such a person is stupid and a simpleton.

The above explanation does not mean that the Power of Allāh is limited, or that His Authority is conditional. No, His Power and Authority are All-encompassing and without limit. In the same way the limitations are meant to apply to the deeds not to doers. Obviously, it is man who has the power to give, see and hear, though he gives with his hand, sees with his eyes and hears with his ears. Likewise, Allāh is All-powerful, but the specification depends on intermediate causes. Zayd is a creation of Allāh, and he was born through the union of his parents in a certain place on a certain day when certain conditions were fulfilled and certain obstacles removed. Now, if even one of these causes be missing and one of these conditions be not fulfilled, there would be no Zayd. Thus the existence of Zayd depends on the fulfilment of all these causes and means ; but what depends is the creature, i.e., Zayd, not the Creator. (Think on this point.)

His words: *Whatever is to happen upto the Day of Resurrection has already been written.* It is based on the sentence, *And when you ask, ask from Allāh,* and gives its reason. It means that all events are written and decreed by Allāh ; no cause has any real influence on them ; therefore, you should not ask from anyone other than Allāh, and should not seek any one's help other than that of Allāh. As for Allāh, His authority is everlasting ; His Power is Eternal ; His Will is effective ; and every day He is in a new Splendour. It is for this reason that this sentence is followed by the words: *and if all the creatures together strived to benefit you with what Allāh did not write for you, they would not be able to do so.*

Among the traditions of *du'ā' is* the near *mutawātir ḥadīth:* ''Verily, *du'ā'* (prayer) is a part of destiny.''

The author says: This is the reply to the objection of the Jews and others on *du'ā'.* They say: The need asked for is either already measured and decreed (to happen) or not. If it is already decreed, then it would happen in any case and the prayer would be superfluous. If it is not decreed, then it can never happen and the prayer would be meaningless. In either case, the prayer will have no effect at all.

The reply: Even when an event is already decreed, it does not mean that it is independent of its causes, and one of the means of its coming into existence is *du'ā'*. If one beseeches Allāh for his need, one of the conditions of its existence is fulfilled ; and the effect follows the cause. This is the meaning of the tradition, ''Verily, *du'ā'* (prayer) is a part of destiny.''

And there are other traditions with the same meaning. There is *a ḥadīth* from the Prophet: ''Nothing turns away the decree (fate) except prayer (*du'ā'*).'' [*Biḥāru 'l-anwār*]. And there is another one from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.): ''Prayer (*du'ā'*) turns away the decree even after it is confirmed.'' [*ibid.*] Another one from Abu'l-Ḥasan Mūsā al-Kāẓim (as.): ''On you is *du'ā',* because *du'ā'* and asking from Allāh turns the calamity away even when it is measured and decreed and nothing remains except its enforcement ; then if Allāh is called upon and asked, He removes that calamity entirely.'' [*ibid*]

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''Verily, the prayer (*du'ā'*) turns away the confirmed decree even after its confirmation. Therefore, pray often (and repeatedly), because it is the key to every mercy and the fulfilment of

every need. And what is with Allāh is not obtained except through prayer ; because verily, no door is knocked repeatedly but it is hoped that it will be opened to the knocker.'' [*ibid.*]

The author says: This *ḥadīth* exhorts one to pray often and repeatedly ; and this is one of the important elements of prayer, as repeated remembrance of a need creates purity of intention.

Ismā'īl ibn Hammām narrates from Abu 'l-Ḥasan (a.s.): ''One secret prayer of a servant is equal to seventy open prayers.''

The author says: This teaches one to keep one's prayer (*du'ā'*) secret and confidential because it helps in keeping the prayer pure.

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''The prayer is kept screened (i.e. is not granted) until he (the beseecher) prays for the blessings of Allāh upon Muḥammad and his progeny.'' [*Makārimu 'l-akhlāq*]

Also, aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''Whoever advances (the names of) forty believers (in his prayers) then prays (for himself), his call will be answered.'' [*ibid.*]

One of the companions of aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said to him: ''There are two verses in the Book of Allāh (the application) for which I am seeking without finding it.'' The Imām asked: ''And what are those?'' The companion says: ''I said, '(there is the verse): *Call upon Me, I shall answer* ... but we call upon Him and do not get any answer.' The Imām said: 'Well, do you think Allāh has broken His promise?' I said: 'No!' He said: 'Then what?' I said: 'I do not know.' He said: 'But I will tell you. Whoever obeys Allāh in His commandments, and then calls upon Him in the proper way, He will answer him.' I said: 'And what is the proper way of prayer (*du'ā'*)?' He said: 'You shall begin with the praise of Allāh and shall glorify Him and remember His bounties upon you and thank Him ; then you shall pray for His blessings upon Muḥammad and his progeny ; then you shall remember your sins and confess them ; then you shall seek (His) pardon for them. So this is the proper way of prayer (*du'ā'*).' Then the Imām asked: 'And what is the second verse?' I said: *'and whatever thing you spend, He returns it* (34:39), and I find that I spend but He does not return it.' He said: 'Well, do you think Allāh has broken His promise?' I said: 'No!' He said: 'Then what?' I said: 'I do not know.' He said: 'If any of you earn his wealth lawfully and spend it in its proper place, he will not spend a single dirham but that Allāh shall return it to him!' '' [*ibid.*]

The author says: The reason of the manners of prayer (*du‘ā’*) mentioned in these traditions is clear, because these things bring the servant (of Allāh) nearer to the reality of prayer and request.

Ibn ’Umar reported that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘‘Verily, when Allāh wishes to answer (the call of) a servant, He allows him to call (upon Him).’’ [*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*]

Also, Ibn ‘Umar narrates from him (the Holy Prophet):‘‘Whenever the door of prayer (*du‘ā’*) is opened for anyone among you, the doors of Mercy are opened for him.’’ Another tradition says: ‘‘When the (door of) prayer is opened for anyone among you, the doors of the Garden (Paradise) are opened for him.’’ [*ibid.*]

The author says: The same thing has been narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu ’l-bayt* also: ‘‘Whoever is given *du‘ā’,* is given (its) answer.’’ Its meaning is clear.

Also there is a tradition from Ma‘ādh ibn Jabal from the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.): ‘‘Had you known Allāh, as He should be known, verily the mountains would have been moved by your prayer.’’ [*ibid.*]

The author says: If a man does not know the dignity of the Creator and the power of His Lordship, and if he relies upon the causes, then he believes that these causes have real influence upon the result, and that events cannot happen without their normal and apparent causes. Sometimes he does not believe that these causes have any real effect upon the outcome, still he thinks that they are essential in order to bring a thing into existence. For example, we see that movement and walking brings one nearer to one’s destination. And even when we do not believe that movement has any real effect on the nearness, we go on believing that movement is a means, though it is Allāh who is the real cause, of that nearness, and in this way we go on believing that the middle causes are essential, at least as a means, if not as the real cause. Thus, we think that if there is no movement, we cannot come near our destination. In short, we believe that the effect cannot be separate from its causes, even if these causes are just apparent means and not the real cause.

But such a belief is below the dignity of Allāh ; it does not conform with divine authority which is total and perfect. It is this belief which creates the idea that effects cannot come into being without their normal causes, e.g. a body cannot be without a weight and gravity ; movement is necessary for bringing two things nearer ; eating and drinking is essential

for satisfying the hunger and thirst, etc. etc. We have already mentioned in the discussion of miracles that the system of cause and effect is an inescapable fact ; but it does not mean that the 'cause' is confined to the normal causes only. Reason as well as the Qur'ān and the traditions prove that while everything depends upon a cause, that cause is not confined within the limits of normal ones. The Creator may create causes for it, quite different from the normal ones. So, while it is true that the effect depends upon a cause, it is not true that it depends upon a particular cause.

Of course, the things which are, according to reason, impossible, cannot come into being.

In short, when you properly know Allāh, you will believe that the prayer for what is not impossible by reason, even if normally it does not happen, will be answered. A major portion of the miracles of the prophets was basically the answer to their calls.

There is in the *at-Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī under the words of Allāh: *So they should answer My call and believe in Me,* a *ḥadīth* from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.): ''They should know that I have power to give them whatever they ask from Me.''

And there is another *ḥadīth* in *Majma'u 'l-bayān* from the same Imām that he said: *''and believe in Me* means that they should have firm belief that I have power to give them what they ask for ; so *that they may walk in the right way* means so that they may reach the Truth."

أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ ٱلصِّيَامِ ٱلرَّفَثُ إِلَى نِسَائِكُمْ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ
لَهُنَّ عَلِمَ ٱللهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَى عَنْكُمْ
فَالْآنَ بَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَٱبْتَغُوا مَا كَتَبَ ٱللهُ لَكُمْ وَكُلُوا وَٱشْرَبُوا حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ
ٱلْخَيْطُ ٱلْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ ٱلْخَيْطِ ٱلْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ ٱلْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ أَتِمُّوا ٱلصِّيَامَ إِلَى ٱللَّيْلِ وَلَا
تُبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي ٱلْمَسَاجِدِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ ٱللهِ فَلَا تَقْرَبُوهَا كَذٰلِكَ
يُبَيِّنُ ٱللهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ـ ١٨٧ .

It is made lawful to you on the night of the fast to go in unto your wives; they are an apparel for you and you are an apparel for them; *Allāh knew that you were acting unfaithfully to yourselves, so He has turned to you* (mercifully) *and forgiven you. Wherefore, now be in contact with them and seek what Allāh has written for you, and eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct unto you from the black thread* (of night) *at dawn-break, then complete the fast until night. And associate not with them while you are confined in the mosque. These are the limits* (prescribed by) *Allāh; therefore, draw not yourselves near them. Thus does Allāh make clear His signs for the people, so that they may guard themselves* (against evil). (2:187)

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *It is made lawful to you on the night of the fast to go in unto your wives.*

Iḥlāl (الاحلال) means to allow ; its root is *ḥall* (to open, الحلّ) which is opposite of *'aqd* (to tie, العقد)

Rafath (الرّفث) literally means to say clearly such words which are generally unmentionable, which are normally only hinted at; such words are usually uttered during sexual intercourse. Now, this ''uttering unmentionable words'' has been used as metaphor of the sexual intercourse; and this is the nobility of the exalted Qur'ān. And all words

used for this meaning in the Qur'ān are of the same type; none were made for copulation, all are used as a metaphor, like *mubāshirah* (to be in contact with each other, المباشرة), *dukhūl* (to enter, الدّخول), *mass* or *lams* (to touch, المسّ or اللّمس) ,*ityān* (to come to, الاتيان),*qurb* (to be near, القرب), etc. The same is the case of the words, *waṭ'* (to press down, الوطء) and *jimā'* (to come together, الجماع) which are used in Islamic books other than the Qur'ān, although some of these words have been so much used for this meaning that now they are no longer metaphoric. The words, *farj* (an opening, الفرج) and *ghā'it* (the depth, الغائط), which are now commonly used for ''vulva'' and ''excrement'' respectively, are the other examples of this type.

It is said that the preposition *ilā* (to, الى) coming here after *rafath* (الرّفث) gives the meaning of entering into.

Qur'ān: *they are an apparel for you and you are an apparel for them.*

Libās (اللّباس) means what a man uses to cover his body. The two sentences are used figuratively, because each spouse restrains the other from unchastity, and protects society from debauchery. Thus each one is like an apparel for the other with which he/she covers his/her shame and protects his/her privacy.

It is a very fine metaphor, and its literary value has been increased by putting it after the sentence, *It is made lawful to you ... to go in unto your wives. A* man hides his private parts from others with his dress, but there is no hiding from the dress itself. Likewise, each spouse protects the other one from having sexual relations with others; but there is no restriction on them against such relations with each other.

Qur'ān: *Allāh knew that you were acting unfaithfully to yourselves, so He has turned to you* (mercifully) *and forgiven you.*

Ikhtiyān (الاختيان) and *khiyānah* (الخيانة) are synonymous ; and it is said that they convey the meaning of defect, decrease. *You were acting unfaithfully* conveys the meaning of continuity ; and it shows that this unfaithfulness commonly continued among the Muslims after the command of the fast had been promulgated; and they were sinning against Allāh secretly by being unfaithful to their own souls. Had not this unfaithfulness been a sin, there would have been no need to mention *turning to them mercifully* and *forgiving;* and although these two words do not say openly that a sin had already been committed, still their most

obvious meaning shows a preceding sin, especially when both are mentioned together.

Accordingly, the verse proves that before its revelation, sexual intercourse in the nights of the fast was forbidden; and that it was this verse which made it lawful and abrogated its prohibition, as has been stated by a group of the commentators of the Qur'ān. As a further proof, look at the words, *It is made lawful to you. You were acting unfaithfully, so He has turned to you* (mercifully) *and forgiven you* and *Wherefore, now be in contact with them.* Had there been no previous prohibition, such words would have been out of context; instead there would have come the words like ''there is no blame on you that you be in contact with them''.

Some people say: ''This verse does not abrogate any rule, because the verse of fasting mentioned earlier did not prohibit intercourse or food or drink in the night. Apparently, according to some Sunnī traditions, when the fast was prescribed and the words were revealed, *Fast has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you* refers to the fast per se, and not meant total conformity in all the details of fast. It is said that the Christians used to eat, drink and go to their women during the early period of the night, then abstained from it. So the Muslims adopted the same system. But it proved difficult. Many youths could not restrain themselves from secret sexual intercourse, but they thought that they were committing a sin and acting unfaithfully to themselves. Likewise, aged persons found it a heavy burden to abstain from eating and drinking once they began their sleep. Sometimes someone could not keep his eyes open before eating and drinking and then thought that food and drink was unlawful for him. It was to remove this misunderstanding that this verse was revealed; it made it clear that sexual intercourse, food and drink was not unlawful for them during the night of Ramaḍān. This verse also made it clear that the comparison in *"as it was prescribed for those before you"* Refers to the fast per se, and not to its details. The words *It is made lawful to you* do not necessarily mean that this was unlawful before that; it simply declares legality of this action. See, for example, the words: *The game of the sea is made lawful to you* (5:96); as it is known that the game of the sea was not unlawful to the pilgrims before the revelation of this verse. Likewise, the words *Allāh knew that you were acting unfaithfully to yourselves*

means that they were doing wrong according to their own view only. That is why Allāh said ‘‘unfaithfully to yourselves’’. Had He said ‘‘unfaithfully to Allāh’’, it would have conveyed the meaning of prohibition, as, for example, in the verse: *Be you not unfaithful to Allāh and the Apostle* (8:27). Also the word *ikhtiyān* (الاختيان) may be taken to mean ‘‘curtail’’ or ‘‘decrease’’ and the sentence may be translated as ‘‘Allāh knew that you were curtailing your desires’’. The words *He has turned to you* (mercifully) *and has forgiven you* do not clearly convey the idea that sexual intercourse was a sin before that.

But this argument is not conclusive, because it goes against the clear meaning of the verse. We have already said that the words like *It is made lawful to you; you were acting unfaithfully to yourselves, He has turned towards you* (mercifully) *and forgiven you* do not say openly that a sin had already been committed; still, this is their most obvious implication. Add to it the words *now be in contact with them* which would be inappropriate if there were no previous prohibition, as I have explained earlier.

The argument, that ‘‘this verse does not abrogate any rule because the verse of fasting did not prohibit sexual intercourse in the night’’, is not valid because that verse did not prohibit it clearly for the day time also. It is known that the Messenger of Allāh had explained the rules of fasting before this verse was revealed. Perhaps the prohibition of sexual relations during the night was one of those rules; and the verse abrogated it. So this verse cancels not another verse, but a tradition of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

Someone may object: The words *they are an apparel for you and you are an apparel for them* have been used as the reason for this permission. Now, the husband and wife were like apparel to each other when, supposedly, copulation at night was forbidden and they remained like the apparel when that prohibition was supposedly lifted. So where, in these words, is the reason for the supposed abrogation if they are equally true in both conditions — before abrogation and after abrogation? We know that the reason given for a rule of the *sharī‘ah is* mostly its benefit, and not necessarily its real causes. And as a benefit, it need not be fully comprehensive. Still, in a supposedly abrogating verse at least it should not be common to both conditions.

But deep consideration of the verse does not sustain this objection. It

is not acceptable that this sentence is the reason of this permission. The permission in this verse is limited to *the night of the fast,* while the simile of apparel is as much true during the day as in the night. So, it cannot be the reason of that permission.

The fact is that the three clauses in this verse coming one after the other, and all taken together, give us the reason for this abrogation. They are *on the night of the fast, they are an apparel for you ... ,*and *you were acting unfaithfully to yourselves.*

As the spouses are like apparel to each other they should be allowed to establish sexual relations together without any restriction. Then came the commandment of the fast, without demanded self-denial and abstention from desires, like food, drink and sexual relations. But the servants of Allāh found it difficult to abstain for a full month from copulation, and this unfaithfulness was common and continued. Therefore, Allāh in His mercy eased the conditions and lightened their burden by allowing it during the night.

In this way, the general implication of the sentence of *apparel* is made subordinate to the *fast;* and thus is limited to the night time only (when there is no fast).

In short, the sentence of apparel is not a reason for this permission; rather it is the reason or benefit of copulation per se. The main aim of the whole verse is to explain why copulation was allowed in the night of fast. And the sentence beginning with *they are an apparel* and ending on *forgiven you* taken together show this reason, not any single sentence alone. And this reason is not found in the rule which was followed before this permission.

Qur'ān: *Wherefore, now be in contact with them and seek what Allāh has written for you.* This is an order preceded by prohibition; thus it means permission. The verse begins with the words, *It is made lawful to you.* The meaning, therefore, is,' from now on you are allowed to establish sexual relations with them''. *Ibtighā'* (الابتغاء) means 'to seek', 'to desire'. *Seek what Allāh has written for you* means seeking the children which Allāh has written to give to the mankind. Allāh created in human being the desire to copulate and made it the means of that gift (of children) and to some extent put them under the pressure of that desire. When a couple engages in that action, they are in reality seeking what Allāh has written for them, even if at that

time their only aim is to satisfy their sexual desire or lust. It is like taking food and drink. Allāh had written that their lives, growth and health depend on food and drink, and that remains the goal of nature even when they, at that particular time, do not look further than satisfying their hunger and thirst or to pamper their gustatory pleasure. This is the compulsion put on them by Allāh in all such matters.

It has been said: *What Allāh has written for you* means ''what Allāh has allowed to you''; and the implication is that they should take advantage of this permission. Allāh likes His servants to take advantage of His permission as He likes them to obey His compulsory commandments.

But his view is not acceptable, because we have not seen a single instance in the Qur'ān where ''writing'' is used for 'permission'.

Qur'ān: *and eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct unto you from the black thread* (of night) *at dawn-break.* There are two dawns: the first is called the 'false' dawn because it vanishes in a short time. It is also called the 'tail of the wolf ' because it looks as if a tail is raised. This false dawn is a beam of light like a vertical column; it appears at the end of the night on the eastern horizon when the sun reaches an angle of 18 degrees below the horizon. Then it gives way to a horizontal line of light which looks as if a white thread has been stretched on the horizon. This is the second dawn. It is called 'true' dawn because it truthfully announces the arrival of day-time and is connected with sunrise.

Obviously, the *white thread* in this verse means the ''true dawn''; and ''at'' (*min,* من) in ''at dawn-break'' (*mina 'l-fajri,* من الفجر) is explanatory so as to clarify this phrase. This sentence is metaphorical and it likens the streak of light, stretched across the horizon, to a white thread and the darkness of night adjoining that light to a black thread.

This shows that the limit of the given permission is exactly the beginning of the true dawn; because soon after, when the sun comes nearer to the horizon, both threads disappear. There remains neither the white thread nor the black.

Qur'ān: *Then complete the fast until night* : As the start of the fast was from the dawn-break, there was no need to say, 'keep the fast during day-time'. Instead its other limit is now mentioned in these words.

Complete the fast shows that the fast of one day is one unit, a single act of worship which is not made up of a various parts. There is a difference between completion (*tamām,* التّمام) and perfection (*kamāl,* الكمال). Completion (*tamām,* التّمام)**,** the word used in this verse, means that a. single thing (which is not made of such parts which may have separate functions) finally comes into being. Perfection (*kamāl,* الكمال) means that a single thing (which has various parts and every part has a separate function) finally comes into being. Allāh says: *This day I perfected* (*akmaltu,* اكملت) *for you your religion and completed* (*atmamtu* , اتممت) *My favour on you* (5:4). The religion is a collection of various things like prayer, fast, *ḥajj* etc. and all these have a separate effect; therefore, the religion was ‘‘perfected’’. But the favour of Allāh is one thing without any parts (as I will explain under that verse); therefore, it was *‘‘*completed*”.*

Qur'ān: *And associate not with them while you are confined in the mosques: ‘ukūf* (العكوف) and *i‘tikāf* (الاعتكاف)both mean ‘‘to keep close to’’. When used with the name of a place, they mean to remain continuously in that place.

I‘tikāf (الاعتكاف) is an act of worship. When in *i‘tikāf* (الاعتكاف), one must remain inside a mosque, not going out without a genuine reason (e.g. to relieve oneself); and fasting is an essential part of this act of worship.

As the Muslims were given permission to have sexual relations with their wives in the night of fast, there was a possibility that they might think that that permission extended to the nights of *i‘tikāf* also, when they were inside a mosque. This sentence removed the chance of any such misunderstanding.

Qur'ān: *These are the limits* (prescribed by) *Allāh; therefore, draw not near them.*

Ḥadd (limit, الحدّ) literally means ‘‘to keep from’’, ‘‘torestrict’’. All its uses carry this meaning; for example, *ḥaddu 's-sayf* (edge of sword , حدّ السّيف), *ḥaddu 'd-dār* (boundary of the house, حدّ الدار), *ḥaddu '1 fujūr* (punishment of immorality, حدّ الفجور) etc. Therefore the phrase, *ḥudūdu 'llāh* (حدود الله) mentioned in the verse, means, the ‘‘restrictive ordinances of Allāh’’ and the command not to go near them figuratively means not to commit that sin. In short, it says: you should not commit the sins mentioned here, i.e., eating, drinking and copulating during the

prohibited hours; you should not trespass beyond the limits ordained for you; you should not neglect the fast or the guarding of yourselves against evil in the period of that special worship.

TRADITIONS

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''Food and copulation were unlawful in the month of Ramaḍān at night after sleeping.'' (That is, if one prayed the prayer of *al-'ishā'* and slept without breaking one's fast, then, he was not allowed to eat or drink even if he awoke later in the night. And sexual intercourse was unlawful in the month of Ramaḍān both in the day and in the night.) There was a companion of the Messenger of Allāh, Khawwāt ibn Jubayr al-Ansārī. He was brother of 'Abdullāh ibn Jubayr, who in the battle of Uḥud, was deputed by the Messenger of Allāh at the mouth of the mountain-pass with fifty archers; most of them left him, but he remained at this station with only twelve soldiers and was martyred there. His brother Khawwāt ibn Jubayr, was an aged and weak person, and was fasting with the Messenger of Allāh in the battle of the Khandaq (Trench). In the evening he came to his house and asked: ''Do you have any food?'' They said: ''Do not go to sleep; we shall prepare some food for you.'' There was some delay in cooking and he was overcome with sleep before breaking his fast. When he woke up he said to his family: ''Now eating is forbidden to me tonight.'' Next day, he presented himself at the Khandaq and fainted. The Messenger of Allāh looked at him and felt pity for him. Also, there were some youths who had secretly indulged in sexual relations at night in the month of Ramaḍān. Therefore Allāh sent down (the verse); *It is made lawful to you on the night of fast to go in unto your wives* ... Thus Allāh allowed sexual relations during the nights of the month of Ramaḍān, and eating after going to sleep upto the dawn-break, as He said, *until the white thread becomes distinct from the black thread* (of night) *at dawn-break.* The Imām said: ''It means the whiteness of the day from the darkness of the night.'' [*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī]

The author says: The sentences (given in bracket), starting with ''That is'' and ending upto ''both in the day and in the night'', are explanatory notes of the narrator of this tradition.

This episode is narrated in other traditions also, by al-Kulaynī,al-

'Ayyāshī and others. All these traditions say that the words, *eat and drink ...* were revealed because of the event of Khawwāt ibn Jubayr al-Anṣārī; and the words *It is made lawful to you …*were revealed because of the secret doings of some Muslim youths.

There is another tradition in *ad-Durru'l-manthūr* from various commentators and traditionalists from Barā' ibn 'Āzib who said: ''It was the custom among the companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that if someone fasted and the time of *ifṭār* (breaking thefast) came but he went to sleep before breaking his fast, he did not eat that night and fasted the next day without eating anything, till the next evening came. Once Qays ibn Ṣarmah al-Anṣārī fasted, and that day he had been working in the field. The time came for breaking the fast and he came to his wife and asked: 'Do you have any food?' He could not keep awake and went to sleep. When his wife returned and found him sleeping she said: 'Woe unto you! Did you go to sleep?' In the noon of the next day, he fainted. This was reported to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Then this verse was sent down: *It is made lawful to you on the night of the fast ... at dawn-break.* And the Muslims were extremely happy at it.''

The author says: This story is narrated by other chains also. In some of them the name is given as Abū Qubays ibn Ṣarmah; in others, Ṣarmah ibn Mālik al-Anṣārī. There is some variation in the story also.

Ibn Jarīr and Ibn al-Mundhir have narrated from Ibn 'Abbās as follows:- ''The Muslims were forbidden (sexual relations with) women and food in the month of Ramaḍān once they had prayed the prayer of *al-'ishā',* till the next evening. But some of them ate food and had sexual intercourse with women after the *al-'ishā'* in one Ramaḍān; one of them was 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. Then they complained about it to the Messenger of Allāh. Therefore Allāh sent down the verse, *It is made lawful to you ... be in contact with them.* [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

The author says: There are numerous traditions from Sunnī chains about this matter; most of them mention the name of 'Umar. All say with one voice that the rule about sexual intercourse in the night of Ramaḍān was the same as that about food and drink: All of these were allowed before the sleep, forbidden after it. But the obvious meaning of the first tradition is that the sexual intercourse was completely forbidden in the month of Ramaḍān, during the night as well as in the day-time; and the food and drink were allowed before sleeping, forbidden after that. And

the context of the verse supports this tradition. Had the sexual relation been like food and drink (allowed before sleeping and forbidden after) it would have been necessary to mention here the farthest limit of the permission, as was done about food and drink (*eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct...*) But it only says: *It is made lawful to you on the night of the fast to go in unto your wives,* without putting any limit to it. It shows that previously they were forbidden to indulge in this act the whole ''night of the fast''.

Some traditions say (and the one quoted last is one of them) that the Muslims were acting unfaithfully not only in the matter of sexual relations, but also in food and drink. But the sequence of the sentences of the verse does not support it. The sentence, *Allāh knew that you were acting unfaithfully ... is* put in the middle of the permission for sexual relations and the words *eat and drink* appear after this topic has ended. Therefore the ''acting unfaithfully'' cannot be connected with eating and drinking.

Verily, the Messenger of Allāh said: ''The dawn is of two kinds. The one which looks like the tail of the wolf does not allow anything, nor prohibits anything. But the long one which covers the horizon allows the prayer (of dawn) and prohibits food.'' [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

The author says: The traditions of this meaning are nearly *mutawātir* from Sunnī and Shī'ah sources; as are the ones about *i'tikāf* and prohibition of sexual intercourse in that period.

وَلا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتُدْلُوا بِهَا إِلَى الْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقاً مِنْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ـ ١٨٨ .

And do not swallow up your property among yourselves by wrongful means ; *neither seek to gain access thereby to the authorities, so that you may swallow up a portion of the property of men wrongfully while you know* (2:188)

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *And do not swallow up your property among yourselves by wrongful means.*

Akl (to eat, to swallow up, الاكل) metaphorically means 'to take hold of, or to make use of '. The reason of this metaphorical use is that eating is the most common and the earliest natural desire; as soon as his life begins, man feels the need of food and then gradually proceeds to other needs like clothing, habitation and marriage, etc. Acquiring food is his first natural action and wilful doing. That is why if one uses or takes a thing it is said one has eaten it, and especially so in the case of wealth and property. And this figure of speech is common to all languages.

Māl (wealth, property, المال) literally means the possession which is desired. It seems that its root is *mayl* (inclination, desire, bent, الميل), because it is one of those things to which the heart is inclined, which it desires. *Baynakum* (among yourselves, بينكم) *bayn* (بين) means the gap between two or more things.

Wrong (*bāṭil,* الباطل) is opposite of truth (*ḥaqq* , الحقّ) : *ḥaqq* (الحقّ) means a thing which is confirmed.

The proviso *among yourselves* added after the command *do not swallow up your property* shows that wealth is for all the people; but Allāh has distributed it among them — a just distribution — by promulgating laws based on justice and equity, which cut at the roots of corruption and immorality. If anybody trespasses the limits put by these laws, it will be invalid and wrong. This verse, in a way, explains the verse: *He it is who created for you all that is in the earth* (2:29).

Your property (*amwālakum,* اموالکم): History and ancient tradition show that ever since man put his foot on this globe, society has recognised the right to property and upheld it in one way or other. By using this possessive pronoun, Allāh confirms this right. This principle has been mentioned in the Qur'ān in more than a hundred places, in various words like dominion (*mulk,* الملک), property (*māl,* المال), the preposition for (*1 ... ,* ل) used for possession, and *istikhlāf* (to make man Allāh's deputy on earth, الاستخلاف); but there is no need to quote the references here. Likewise all the verses which regulate selling, trade and other commercial dealings implicitly recognise this right. For example: *and Allāh has allowed trading* (2:275)*, do not swallow up your property among yourselves by wrongful means, except that it be trading by your mutual consent* (4:29), *and the trade dullness of which you fear* (9:25) and other such references. And *mutawātir* traditions support it.

Qur'ān: *neither seek to gain access thereby to the authorities, so that you may swallow up a portion of the property of man wrongfully while you know.*

Idlā' (translated here as "to gain access", الادلآء) literally means to send the bucket (*dalū',* الدّلوء) down into the well for drawing water. Its metaphorical use in this verse implies offering money, etc., to the authorities to induce them to give judgement in favour of the bribe-giver. It is a very nice allegory. The desired judgement is the water in the depth of the well; the bribe is the bucket which is sent down to bring the desired result.

A portion (*farīqan,* فريقا): It is a part separated from the whole.

This sentence is in conjunction with the word *swallow up* ; therefore, grammatically it is a prohibitory verb, and hence the sign of quiescence.

Another possibility: The "and" (w ..., و) (the conjunction word not appearing in the above translation) may be taken to mean "with" (ma', مع), and further it may be presumed that after it, the word that (*inna,* انّ) is implied. In this case the whole verse will be one sentence and will mean: "…..by wrongful means with seeking to gain access. . ." Thus, the verse prohibits the mutual understanding between the bribe-giver and bribe-taker so that they wrongfully swallow up the property of the people by sharing it between themselves — the bribe-taker taking the portion which

has been offered to him, and the giver usurping the other portion — while they know that it is wrong and unjust.

TRADITIONS

In a tradition, aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) says about this verse: ‘‘The Arabs used to gamble with their wives and property. So, Allāh prohibited them to do so.’’ [*al-Kāfī*]

Abū Basīr says: ‘‘I asked Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) the meaning of the words of Allāh in His book: *and do not swallow up your property among yourselves by wrongful means; neither seek to gain access thereby to the authorities.* He (the Imām) said: ‘O Abū Basīr! Verily Allāh knew that there would be in this *ummah* judges who would do injustice. Verily, He did not mean (here) judges of a just authority, but He meant those of an unjust authority. O Abū Muḥammad! (i.e. Abū Baṣīr) If you had a right against someone and you summoned him to the judges of a just authority, but he did not agree to it and compelled you to put your case before the judges of an unjust authority, so that they might decide in his favour, then that man would be among those who had resorted to- the judgement of the *ṭāghūt* (Satan). And it is the word of Allāh: *Have you not observed those who think that they believe in what has been sent down unto you and what was sent down before you? They intend to resort to the judgement of ṭāghūt* (Satan), *though they were commanded to deny* (reject) *him* ... (4:60)*’ ’’* [*ibid.*]

There is a tradition from Abū Ja‘far (a.s.): ‘‘The meaning of ‘wrongful means’ is the false oath with which property is usurped.’’ [*Majma‘u ’l-bayān*]

The author says: All the above traditions give some examples, but the verse is general.

ON SOCIAL SCIENCE

All organic things, vegetable, animal and human beings make use of other things to sustain their lives. They actively take advantage of those surrounding things which may help in their continued existence.

We have never heard of a thing which exists but is not active, or an action which is done without the doer expecting its benefit to return to him. Remark the vegetable kingdom which does whatever it does with the single aim of benefiting from it in its existence, growth, and reproduction. Similarly, all animals and human beings do whatever they do with the aim of getting benefit one way or another, even if that benefit be only in the imagination and thought.

Plants have been taught by the Creator, and animals and men know by their instinct that they cannot use any material for the fulfilment of their natural needs and the protection of their existence unless that material has a very special relation to them; in other words, unless it belongs to them. They know that one deed cannot be done by two doers. Accordingly, man and animal etc. prohibit others from interfering in their affairs and do not allow anything to utilize what they want to utilize for themselves. This is the foundation of this special relation - namely, possession which is recognised by one and all. Hence the words ‘my’, ‘your’, etc. etc.

For a further proof, look at any animal fighting to remove others from its territory, its prey, or its mate. Again, see children quarrelling for, and defending, whatever food, or toy, they have got. Even a suckling infant does not allow another infant to suck at the same breast. This is the lesson taught by nature. When man, being a social animal, established society, that natural instinct was bound to become more pronounced; and eventually became a well-organised and well balanced system that took the shape of social ethics and moral values; gradually the basic concept of that special relation branched off into various kinds with different names: the monetary relation was named ‘property’, the nonmonetary, ‘right’, and so on.

Human beings may have different views on the legality of various means of acquiring property, like inheritance, trade, confiscation by the ruling authority, etc., or on the suitability of the owner, whether he is adult or minor, sane or idiot, a single person or a group, and so on. But there is no escape from recognising the basic principle of ownership. That is why even those who apparently reject the idea of ownership, have only transferred it from the individual to the society or the state.

Even then, they have not been able to abolish private ownership totally; and they will never be able to do so, because it is the verdict of

nature, and if nature is rejected, man will perish.

We shall discuss, God willing, in their proper places the details of this basic principle, according to the means of its acquirement, such as trade, profit, inheritance, war-booty, collection, etc. and according to the status of the owner, i.e. adult or minor, etc.

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهِلَّةِ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنِ اتَّقَىٰ وَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ـ ١٨٩ .

They ask you concerning the new moons. Say, they are(indications of) *times fixed for men and* (for) *the pilgrimage. And it is not righteousness that you should enter the houses from their backs; but righteousness is the one who guards himself* (against evil); *and enter the houses by their doors and fear Allāh, so that you may be successful* (2:189).

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *They ask you ... the pilgrimage. Ahillah* (الأهلة) is plural of *hilāl* (crescent, الهلال). The moon is called *hilāl* (الهلال) at the beginning of the lunar month when it comes away from the direct rays of the sun; it is named crescent (*hilāl,* الهلال) on the first and second nights according to one group, while some others say that it is named so for the first three nights; still others say that this name continues until a faint circle of light shows the outline of the moon. A fourth group says that is a ‘‘crescent’’ until its light brightens the night; this occurs on the seventh night, after which it is simply called moon (*qamar,* القمر) and on the fourteenth night it becomes full noon (*badr,* البدر).Its general name in Arabic is *zibriqān* (الزّبرقان).

The Arabs say *istahalla 'ṣ-ṣabiyy* (استهل الصّبىّ) when the newly born child cries soon after birth. Also they say *ahalla'l-qawmu bi 'l-ḥajj* (اهل القوم بالحجّ) when the pilgrims call out loudly *labbayk Allāhumma labbayk.* Thus the root *H-L-L* (هلل) gives the idea of raising one's voice, and the new moon is called *hilāl* (الهلال) because people hail it and raise their voice to point it out.

Mawāqit (المواقيت) is plural of *mīqāt* (الميقات) which means the

time appointed for a work. It also means the place appointed for it, as we say: The *mīqāt* of the Syrians or the Yemenes, which means the place where they wear the robes of *iḥrām* for pilgrimage. In this verse it has the first meaning, i.e. the appointed time.

They ask you concerning the new moons. It does not say what the question was. Some say that they wanted to know the reality of the moon and why it appeared in different shapes from night to night. Others think that they wished to know the reason for the reappearance of the new moon after its disappearing at the end of the month.

But the word used is *ahillah* (new moons, الأهلّة) in the plural, and it proves that the question was not about the reality of the moon or its various phases; because in that case it would have been appropriate to say ''they ask you concerning the moon'' not ''the new moons''. And if the question was about the reason of the new moon, the proper words would be ''they ask you concerning the new moon''. In both cases the use of the plural would be inappropriate. This plural ''new moons'' proves that the question was: What is the reason or benefit of the appearance of the moon as crescent after crescent and of its marking the lunar months? This question was shortened into ''new moons'' because it is the new moon which starts a new month; and then its benefit was explained.

This question may be inferred from the reply: *say they are* (indications of) *times fixed for men and* (for) *pilgrimage.* The times fixed for various actions and activities are the 'months', and not the various shapes of the moon but about the lunar months which are marked by the new moons. And Allāh explained that these months were the times fixed for the benefit of man in affairs of their material and spiritual lives. Man, by his nature, is obliged to measure all his activities by time. It was, therefore, necessary to divide time (which is the yard-stick of his actions) into various short and long portions. The mercy of Allāh which looks after the affairs of His creatures, and guides them towards the betterment of their lives, effected this division by creating night, day, month, season and year etc. The most obvious and the clearest division is the grouping of the days in the lunar months. Everyone may benefit from it, be he a scholar or an ignorant person, a bedouin or a city-dweller; everyone can observe the beginning of the new moon if his eye-sight is correct; and everyone may easily keep its

count. These benefits are conspicuously absent in the solar calendar: mane did not wake to this idea, and could not come to grips with its complicated reckoning, until many centuries after human society came into being. Moreover, not every one can always know the dates of the solar calendar.

Therefore, the lunar months are the times fixed and prescribed for men for their use in their material and spiritual affairs, and especially so for the *ḥajj* (pilgrimage) because it is performed in the known months.

The *ḥajj* (pilgrimage) has espc :daily been mentioned here as an introduction to the topic which is dealt with in the following sentences.

Qur'ān: *And it is not righteousness ... by their doors.*

It is known from the reports that in the days before Islam it was the custom of some Arabs that after wearing the robes of *iḥrām* for pilgrimage, if they had to enter their houses for any reason, they did not use the doors, but cut a hole in the wall for that purpose. Islam disapproved that practice and told them to enter the houses from their doors. The verse has been revealed in a way that the above-mentioned report may be believed to be true.

Had there been no such reliable report, these words could be interpreted metaphorically as a prohibition of performing religious rites in any way other than the prescribed one. For example, pilgrimage should not be done but in its prescribed months, fast should not be kept in any month other than Ramaḍān, and so on. In that case, the sentence would have been complementary to the previous one. The meaning would have been: These months are the times prescribed for the religious deeds fixed for them, and it is not permitted to transfer those dees to other months, like doing *ḥajj* (pilgrimage) outside the prescribed months or .fasting in a month other than Ramaḍān.

But the first interpretation is supported by the traditions. The words, *it is not righteousness* to *enter the houses from their backs,* proves that this practice was never approved of by the religion; otherwise it would not have been said to be against righteousness. It was just a bad custom of the pre-Islamic times; and Allāh said that it was not righteousness. Rather, righteousness was the fear of Allāh and guarding oneself against evil.

but righteousness is the one who guards himself (against evil): Apparently, the sentence should have been ''but righteousness is guarding oneself (against evil)'', but Allāh used the expression *the one who guards*

himself to show that the real virtue is in practicing ‘‘piety’’, and not in its abstract idea. It is like the verse: *It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the east and the west but righteousness is the one who believes in Allāh ...* (2:177)

and enter the houses by their doors: It is not a compulsory order; it is a guidance that entering into houses from their doors is the proper method, as it is the usual and recognised way. People build houses and put doors in them for this very purpose, and there is no reason why a hole should be drilled for entering into, or going out of, the house. This sentence admonishes them not to follow a foolish custom which goes against common sense. In short, the sentence does not say that it is obligatory on every one to enter into a house through the door. It just tells them that it is the proper way. Of course, if one enters into a house by a way other than the door, thinking that this custom is a part of religion, then it will be an ‘‘unlawful innovation’’.

Qur’ān: *and fear Allāh, so that you may be successful.* It was mentioned in the beginning of this *sūrah* (chapter) that *taqwā* (piety) is virtue which gathers in its fold all ranks of the faith and all stages of perfection. Obviously, not every stage and rank leads one to spiritual success and happiness, as do the last stages which remove all shades of polytheism and misdirection. It is these last stages which guide one to success and bring the good tidings of happiness. That is why Allāh said, *so that you may be successful,* using the word ‘may’.

Also, it is possible to interpret the words, ‘‘fear Allāh’’, here as following this particular order, and discarding the practice of going into houses from their backs.

TRADITIONS

Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim have narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘‘The people asked the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) concerning the new moons. Then this verse was revealed, *They ask you concerning the new moons. Say, ‘they are* (indications of) *times fixed for men’;* they know from them the time their loans are due, the waiting period (number of months a women must wait after divorce or the death of her husband before the next marriage) of their women and the time of their pilgrimage.’’ [*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*] Some others from different

chains are from Abu '1-'Āliyah, Qatādah and others.

There is another tradition that someone asked the Prophet about the various phases of the moon; so this verse was sent down. But we have already commented on this report that it is against the apparent meaning of the verse, and, therefore, is not worthy of consideration.

There is a tradition reported by Wakī', al-Bukhārī and Ibn Jarīr from al-Barā'. In the days of ''ignorance'', when they wore the *iḥrām,* they used to go into the house from its back. There fore, Allāh sent down the verse *And it is not righteousness that you should enter the houses from their backs; but righteousness is the one who guards himself* (against evil); *and enter the houses by their doors.* [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

There is another tradition reported by Ibn Abī Ḥātim and al-Ḥākim (and he has said that it is ''correct'') from Jābir. He said: ''The Quraysh were called *ḥums* (enthusiastic, strenuous, الحمس), and they used to enter by the doors in the condition of *iḥrām.* The *anṣār* (helpers) and other Arabs did not enter from the door in *iḥrām.* Once the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) was in a garden, and came out from its door, and Quṭbah ibn 'Āmir al-Anṣārī came out with him. The people said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! Verily Quṭbah ibn 'Āmir is a sinner, he came out with you from the door.' The Prophet asked him: 'Why did you do so?' He replied: 'I saw you doing it, so I did as you did.' The Prophet said: 'I am an *aḥmas* (i.e. Qurayshite).' He said: 'But my religion is your religion.' Then Allāh sent down: *it is not righteousness that you should enter the houses from their backs.* [*ibid.*]

The author says: Other traditions of nearly the same meaning have been narrated from other chains. *Ḥums* (الحمس) *is* the plural of *aḥmas* (الاحمس) from *ḥimāsah* (الحماسة) which means ''hardiness''. The tribe of Quraysh was called *ḥums* (الحمس) because of their zeal in the matter of their religion, or because of their bravery and strength.

Apparently, this tradition shows that the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) had allowed the continuation of that custom by non-Qurayshites before this incident; and that is why he admonished him in these words: ''Why did you do so?'' If we accept this view then this verse was revealed to abrogate a rule which was enforced not by a verse but by the order of the Prophet. But you already know that the verse does not support this view. It says, *it is not righteousness*

that you should enter ... It is unimaginable that Allāh or His Apostle on divine command enforced a rule and then Allāh at the time of its abrogation condemned and criticised it as being against righteousness.

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said about the word of Allāh, *and enter the houses by their doors*: ''Allāh means that every affair, whatever it may be, should be approached in its (proper) way''. [*al-Maḥāsin*]

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''The Imāms (*al-awṣiyā'*) are the doors of Allāh, from which Allāh is approached; and had they not been there, Allāh would not have been known; and it is through them that Allāh has established His proof over His creatures.'' [*al-Kāfī*]

The author says: This tradition gives an example of the general meaning of this verse, which has been explained in the previous one. There is no doubt that the verse is general in its meaning, even if it was sent down on a particular occasion. The Imām said: ''had they not been there, Allāh would not have been known". This refers to the true explanation of religion and the complete Call (Mission of the Prophet) which are with them. This sentence has a deeper meaning also; maybe we shall explain it later on. There are numerous traditions of the same meaning as given in these two.

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْمُعْتَدِينَ ـ ١٩٠. وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ
وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا تُقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّىٰ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ
فَإِنْ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ كَذَٰلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ ـ ١٩١ . فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ـ ١٩٢ . وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنِ
انْتَهَوْا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ ـ ١٩٣ . الشَّهْرُ الْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ
وَالْحُرُمَاتُ قِصَاصٌ فَمَنِ اعْتَدَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدَىٰ
عَلَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ـ ١٩٤. وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ـ ١٩٥ .

And fight in the way of Allāh with those who fight with you and do not exceed the limits. Verily, Allāh loves not those who exceed the limit. (190) *And kill them wherever you find them and drive them out from whence they drove you out; and mischief* (disbelief) *is more grievous than slaughter; and do not fight with them at the Sacred Mosque until they fight with you therein*; *but if they do fight you than slay them; such is the recompense of the unbelievers*. (191) *But if they desist, then verily Allāh is forgiving, Merciful*. (192) *And fight with them until there is no* (more) *mischief* (disbelief), *and religion be only for Allāh*; *but if they desist then there should be no hostility except against the oppressors*. (193) *The sacred month for the sacred month and reprisal* (is lawful) *in all sacred things; whoever then acts aggressively against you, inflict the like aggression on him as he has inflicted on you,. and fear Allāh and know that Allāh is with those who guard* (against evil). (194) *And spend in the way of Allāh and cast not yourselves into perdition with your own hands*;

and do good; *verily Allāh loves those who do good*. (195)

GENERAL COMMENT

The context of the verses shows that they were revealed together. The whole talk has only one aim; permission, for the first time, of fighting with the polytheists of Mecca. These verses refer to driving them out from whence they drove the believers out, to disbelief and to reprisal; they prohibit fighting with them at the Sacred Mosque unless they fight the believers in it. All these matters were connected with the polytheists of Mecca. Also, the sentence: *fight in the way of Allāh with those who fight with you,* deserves more attention. It is not a condition, i.e., it does not mean, ''fight with them if they fight with you''. Nor is it a restrictive clause (as some people think) meaning, ''fight with the men, and not with their women and children who are not in a position to fight with you'', because nobody ''fights'' with those who are unable to fight back. Had it been the aim of the sentence, it would have been proper to say ''do not kill them''. Therefore, the words *those who fight with you* only refer to a fact — fight those who are presently engaged in fighting against you. And it points to the polytheists of Mecca.

The verses have the same significance as the following verses: *Permission* (to fight) *is given to those upon whom war is made, for they have been oppressed, and most surely Allāh is able to help them; those who have been expelled from their homes with-out a just cause except that they say, Our Lord is Allāh* (22:39—40). These verses also contain the initial (but unconditional) permission to fight with the fighting polytheists.

These five verses together promulgate a single law covering all its limits and details. *And fight in the way of Allāh* is the basic law; *and do not exceed the limit* puts disciplinary restriction on it; *And kill them. wherever you find them* defines the limits of pressure; *and do not fight with them at the Sacred Mosque until they fight with you therein* puts a restriction according to the place; *and fight with them until there is no more mischief* (dis-belief) shows its duration; *The sacred month for the sacred month, and reprisal* (is lawful) *in all sacred things* explains that this legislation is based on the principle of retaliation in fighting and

killing, it is paying them in their own coin; *And spend in the way of Allāh* makes the believers responsible for the financial preparations for war: they must spend for their own preparation and for that of others. Therefore, it seems that all the five verses were sent down together about one subject. It is wrong to say (as some have done) that some of these verses abrogate the others; or that they were revealed separately on different occasions. In fact, the aim of all these verses is one: permission to fight against the polytheists of Mecca who were fighting the believers.

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *And fight in the way of Allāh with those who fight with you*: *qitāl* (القتال) means attempting to kill someone who is attempting to kill you. This fight was *in the way of Allāh* because its aim was to establish the religion and to raise the belief of monotheism. It was an act of worship done to gain the favour of Allāh, and not to usurp the property of people or to damage their dignity. War in Islam is basically defensive; it protects the right of humanity sanctioned by nature, as will be explained later. Defence is by nature a limited venture; that is why Allāh said soon after this permission, *and do not exceed the limit.*

Qur'ān: *and do not exceed the limit. Verily, Allāh loves not those who exceed the limit: i'tidā'* (الاعتداء) means going beyond the boundary. The Arabs say *'adā* (عدا) and *i'tadā* (اعتدى) when someone goes beyond the boundary. This prohibitory order is general and covers all the situations where one may be said to exceed the limit, like fighting someone before calling him to follow the path of truth, or starting a war, or killing women and children, or not desisting from war when ordered: Its other examples are explained in the traditions of the Prophet.

Qur'ān: *And kill them wherever ... than slaughter*: *thiqāfah* (ثقافة) means "to find". This sentence is similar to the verse: *then slay the polytheists wherever you find them* (9:6).*Fitnah* (الفتنة) is the means of testing a thing. It is also used for the test itself as well as its related things like difficulty and hardship. It is also used for punishment, and the crimes and sins which bring that punishment in their wake, like polytheism, disbelief and going astray. The Qur'ān has used this word in various places in all these meanings.

In this verse the word means ascribing a partner to Allāh and disbelieving in His Messenger and persecuting and oppressing the Messenger of Allāh and the believers as was done by the polytheists of Mecca before and after the Hijrah.

The verse says: Put the utmost pressure on the polytheists by killing them wherever they be found until they are compelled to go out of their town and emigrate from their land, as they did to you. And whatever they did to you was more grievous, because it was simply a mischief and an act of infidelity; and mischief and infidelity are more grievous than killing. Killing only terminates the life of this world while infidelity terminates this life as well as the next one and destroys both worlds.

Qur'ān: *and do not fight with them ... recompense of the disbelievers.* It prohibits fighting with them at the Sacred Mosque (*Masjidu 'l - Ḥarām*), to protect its sanctity, as long as they respect that sanctity. *Therein* refers to the Sacred Mosque.

Qur'ān: *Then if they desist, then verily Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.*

Intihā' (الانتهاء) means to desist from, to abstain from. *If they desist* means ''if they desist from fighting near the Sacred Mosque'', because the sentence is mentioned immediately after that topic. It does not mean desisting from fighting altogether by accepting Islām and obeying its commands. However this topic comes soon after it and then Allāh will refer to it in these words, *but if they desist then there should be no hostility except against the oppressors.*

Thus the two sentences refer to two completely different matters, and there is no repetition.

Then verily Allāh is forgiving, Merciful. This sentence puts the cause in the place of the effect. The full meaning is: ''But if they desist from fighting at the Sacred Mosque, then you must desist from it, because Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful.''

Qur'ān: *And fight with them until there is no more mischief* (disbelief) *and the religion be only for Allāh.* This defines the time-limit of the fighting. *Fitnah* (الفتنة) (translated here as 'disbelief ' and 'mischief ') means here 'ascribing a partner to Allāh and worshipping idols', as was the custom of the polytheists of Mecca, who compelled others to do likewise. This meaning is inferred from the next sentence,

and religion be only for Allāh.

This verse is similar to the verse: *And fight with them until there is no mischief* (disbelief), *and the religion be only for Allāh; but if they desist, then verily Allāh sees what they do. And if they turn back, then know that Allāh is your Master; The Most Excel-lent Master and the Most Excellent Helper* (8:39-40).

This verse shows that it is obligatory to call them to the right path before the war. If they accept the call, there will be no fighting; but if they reject it then there is no Master except Allāh, and He is the most excellent Master and the most excellent Helper ;He helps his believing servants. It is known that fighting is prescribed so that the religion be only for Allāh. Such a fighting cannot be started until the adversaries are first invited to come onto the right path, i.e. the religion based upon monotheism.

Some people wrote that this verse was abrogated by the verse: *Fight those who do not believe in Allāh, nor in the latter day, nor do they prohibit what Allāh and His Apostle have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth, from among those who were given the Book, until they pay the jizyah* (tributory tax) *with their hand while they are in a state of subjection* (9:29).

But there is no question of either verse abrogating the other, because they deal with different subjects. The verse under discussion is, as explained earlier, about the Meccan polytheists and does not cover the People of the Book who are referred to inverse 9:29. *And the religion be only for Allāh* means that idol-worship be abolished and the oneness of Allāh be accepted. The people of the Book do believe in One Creator. We know their belief is in reality disbelief as Allāh says that they: *do not believe in Allāh, nor in the latter day, nor do they prohibit what Allāh and His Apostle have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth.* But Islam is content with their mere profession of monotheism. Fighting with them was ordained not to make them believe in monotheism, but simply so that they might pay tribute to the Muslims, thus raising the true creed above their creed and making Islam victorious over all religions.

Qur'ān: *but if they desist then there should be no hostility except against the oppressors.* If they desist from disbelief in what you believe in, then cease fighting with them, because there is no hostility except

against the oppressors. In this verse also, the cause has been mentioned in place of the effect. Instead of saying ‘‘then cease fighting with them’’ it points out the cause that *there should be no hostility except against the oppressors.* It is like the verse: *But if they repent and establish the prayer and pay the zakāt, then they are your brethren in faith* (9:11).

Qur’ān: *The sacred month for the sacred month and reprisal* (is lawful) *in all sacred things. ḥurumāt* (sacred things, الحرمات) refers to the sanctity of the sacred month, the sanctity of the ‘‘boundary’’ (*ḥaram*) of Mecca, and the sanctity of the Sacred Mosque. If the Meccan polytheists disregard the sanctity of the sacred month by fighting in it — and they did violate its sanctity when they prevented the Prophet and his companions from pilgrimage (*‘umrah*) in the years of Ḥudaybiyah (6 A.H.), and attacked them with arrows and stones — then the believers are allowed to fight them in that month and it would not be deemed disrespectful towards it. The believers are fighting in the way of Allāh and are obeying His Command to raise up His word. Likewise, if the infidels violate the sanctity of the boundary of Mecca or the Sacred Mosque by fighting in it or in that area then the believers may hit back at them in that place and that area.

The sacred month for the sacred month describes a particular example, followed by a general observation, *and reprisal* (is lawful) *in all sacred things.* This in its turn is followed by even more general principle*, whoever then acts aggressively against you, inflict the like aggression on him as he has inflicted on you.*

The meaning, thus, will be: Allāh has sanctioned reprisal in the sacred month because He has sanctioned it for all sacred things. And He has sanctioned reprisal for all sacred things because He has made it lawful for His servants to inflict aggression equal to the aggression inflicted upon them.

Then He exhorts them to remain steadfastly cautious when inflicting aggression in reprisal, lest they trespass the limit. After all, punishing an oppressor seems sweet, and all animal instincts are roused when one is engaged in taking revenge. There are more chances of deviation from justice, by the use of excessive force, and by disregard of the limits put by the religion. But the fact has already been mentioned that *Allāh loves not those who exceed the limit.* And the believers are most in need of the

love of Allāh, His patronage and His help. Therefore, they are told to *fear Allāh and know that Allāh is with those who guard* (against evil).

The question arises: Why Allāh sanctioned acting aggressively when He does not love those who act aggressively (or, as translated above, exceed the limit)? Of course, acting aggressively is to be condemned, but only when it is not in response to an aggression. But if it is hi reprisal of an aggression, then it is not ‘‘exceeding the limit’’ or ‘‘acting aggressively’’. It is defending one-self from degradation, and liberating oneself from the fetters of slavery, oppression and injustive. It is like showing pride before a proud man, or the open utterance of evil in speech by the one who has been wronged.

Qur’ān: *And spend in the way of Allāh and cast not yourselves into perdition with your own hands.* It is the command to spend wealth for waging war in the way of Allāh. The clause, *in the way of Allāh* attached to ‘‘spending’’ has the same significance as when attached to ‘‘fighting’’ in 2:190. ‘‘With your hands’’ (*biaydīkum,* بايديكم); with (*b ...,* ب) here is extra, added for emphasis. The meaning is ‘‘and cast not your hands in perdition’’. The hand is a symbol of power, ability and strength; and the verse says: do not nullify or waste your strength by not spending money in preparation for war. Another interpretation: ‘‘with’’ (*b*... ب) signifies the cause or means; and the object of the verb is yourselves (*anfusakum,* انفسكم) which is deleted but understood. Accordingly, the meaning will be as translated above: *and cast not your selves into perdition with your own hands.*

Tahlukah (التّهلكة) and *hilāk* (الهلاك) are synonymous; both mean to perish, to fall in perdition. When man becomes in such a condition that he does not know where he is, this word is used. *Tahlukah* (التّهلكة) is with the paradigm of *taf‘ulah* (تفعله). There is no other infinitive verb in Arabic with this paradigm.

The order is, anyhow, general; and it prohibits any commission or omission which may cause perdition, whether it is on the side of excess or deficiency. For example, miserliness and avarice when preparing for war would weaken the fighters and make the army of Islām the target of the enemy; and many would be killed. On the other hand, extravagance in expenditure would bring poverty and misery to such a spender, degrade him in society and make life unbearable. Both these actions are prohibited by this verse.

Allāh finished this talk on ‘‘doing good’’, and said: *and do good; verily Allāh loves the doers of good.* Doing good does not mean desisting from fighting, or clemency in killing the enemies of the religion etc. It means doing a wok in its proper way: Fight when fighting is required; restrain yourselves when restraint is preferred; be strict where strictness is demanded by reason, and forgive where forgiveness will not embolden the enemy. In short, repulsing the oppressor by the most reasonable means is to do good for humanity, because this repulsion guarantees humanity its due right, and defends the religion which would improve man’s condition in both worlds.

Further, desisting from exceeding the limits while obtaining the due right is another good action. And love of Allāh is the final good of the religion; and it is essential for every follower of religion to be worthy of the love of Allāh by obeying His command and following His Apostle. Allāh says in the Qur’ān: *Say ‘‘if you love Allāh then follow me, Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins’’* (3:30).

These five verses — and they are about fighting — began with the prohibition of exceeding the limit and that: *Verily Allāh loves not those who exceed the limit,* and ended with the command to do good and that: *Verily Allāh loves those who do good.* Its delicacy and subtlety need no explanation.

THE WAR, AS ORDAINED BY THE QUR’ĀN

The Qur’ān ordered the Muslims to desist from fighting and patiently bear all persecutions in the way of Allāh. See, for example, the following verses:-

> *Say*: *‘‘O unbelievers! I do not worship that which you worship, nor do you worship Him whom I worship; nor am I going to worship that which you worship; nor are you going to worship Him whom I worship. Unto you be your religion, and unto me my religion.’’* (Ch. 109)
>
> *And bear patiently what they say.* (73:10)
>
> *Have you not seen those to whom it was said: Withhold your hands and establish prayer and pay the poor-rate* (*zakat*)*, but when fighting was prescribed for them ...* (4:77)

This last verse refers to the following:-

Many of the people of the Book wish that they could turn you back into unbelievers after you had believed, out of envy on their part, (even) *after the truth has become manifest unto them. But pardon and forgive* (them) so *that Allāh should bring about His command. Verily, Allāh is Powerful over all things. And establish prayer and give the poor-rate* ... (2:109—110)

Then came the verses of fighting. Among them are the verses sanctioning fighting with the polytheists of Mecca and their allies:-

Permission (to fight) *is given to those upon whom war is made, for they have been oppressed, and surely Allāh is able to help them*; *those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say*: *Our Lord is Allāh* (22:39-40). This verse might have been revealed to allow the Muslims to defend themselves at Badr etc.

And fight with them until there is no mischief (disbelief), *and the religion be only for Allāh; but if they desist, then verily Allāh sees what they do. And if they turn back, then know that Allāh is your Master; the Most Excellent Master and the Most Excellent Helper* (8:39—40).

And fight in the way of Allāh with those who fight with you, and do not exceed the limit. Verily, Allāh loves not those who exceed the limit (2:190).

And among them are the verses permitting fighting with the people of the Book:-

Fight those who do not believe in Allāh, nor in the latter day, nor do they prohibit what Allāh and His Apostle have prohibited, nor follow the religion of truth, from among those who were given the Book, until they pay the jizyah (tributory tax) *with their hand while they are in a state of subjection* (9:29).

Also among them are the verses for fighting against the polytheists in general, and here, this word covers all unbelievers except the people of the Book:-

Then slay the polytheists wherever you find them (9:6).

And fight the polytheists all together as they fight you altogether (9:36).

And finally there are the verses allowing the fight against the unbelievers in general:-

Fight those of the unbelievers who are near to you and let

them find in you hardiness (9:123).

In short, the Qur'ān says that Islam — the religion of monotheism — is based on the foundation of true nature, and is responsible for the well-being of humanity in this life. Allāh says: *Then set your face uprightly for the* (right) *religion — the nature made by Allāh in which He has made men*; *there is no alteration* (by anyone else) *in the creation of Allāh*; *that is the established* (or the custodian) *religion, but most people do not know* (30:30).Therefore, establishing and maintaining this religion is the most important right for humanity which has been laid down. Allāh says: *He has prescribed for you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nūḥ and that which We have revealed unto you and that which we enjoined upon Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and 'Īsā, then establish the religion and be not divided therein* (42:13). And to defend this prescribed natural right is another natural right. Allāh says: *And had there not been Allāh's repelling some people by others, certainly would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which Allāh's name is much remembered. And surely Allāh will help him who helps Him* (i.e. His cause), *most verily Allāh is Strong, Mighty* (22:40). It is, thus, made clear that the religion of monotheism can stand on its feet and remain alive only if there is proper arrangement for its defence against enemies, as Allāh says: *And were it not for Allāh's repelling some men with others, the earth certainly would be in a state of disorder* (2:251). Also, He says in the chapter of al-Anfāl in the middle of the topic of fighting: *That He may establish the truth of what was true and bring to naught what was false, though the guilty ones disliked* (8:8). After some verses, He says: *O you who believe! Answer* (the call of) *Allāh and His Apostle when he calls you to that which gives you life* (8:24). Here the war and fighting, to which the believers are called, has been termed as something giving them life. It means that fighting — whether waged for the defence of the Muslims, or that of the Islamic territory or even that which is initiated — is in reality in defence of the right of humanity in this life. Polytheism is the death of humanity and a corruption of nature, and it is the defence of its right that resurrects it and gives it a new lease of life.

An intelligent observer will realize at this juncture that Islam should have had a parallel defensive system to cleanse the earth from polytheism

of every shade and to purify the faith of all those who believe in one Creator. After all, the fighting mentioned in the above verses has only two aims: Removing noticeable polytheism, that is idol-worship, and raising the word of truth above the creeds of the people of the Book by compelling them to pay *jizyah.* But it does not remove less noticeable polytheism; even the people of the Book are not true believers in One God. The same verse (9:29), which allows them to pay *jizyah,* declares that they do not believe in Allāh or His Apostle and do not follow the religion of truth. Therefore, they are in reality polytheists even though they profess to believe in one God; their polytheism is hidden behind their declared monotheism. And if the Muslims were to defend the natural right of humanity, they should bring them into the fold of Islam — the true religion.

The Qur'ān does not give such an order in clear words, but it promises them the final victory over their enemies; and the promised victory is of such a nature that it cannot be achieved with out waging this kind of war, a war to establish pure monotheistic belief. Allāh says: *He it is Who sent His Apostle with the guidance and the religion of truth so that He may make it triumph over all the religions, though the polytheists may be averse* (61:9). And clearer than this is the verse, *And certainly, We did write in the Zabūr after the Reminder that the earth, shall inherit it my righteous servants* (21:105). Even far more clear is the verse, *Allāh has promised unto those of you who believe and do good deeds that He will certainly make them Successors in the earth as He made Successors those before them, and that He will certainly establish for them their religion which He has chosen for them, and that He will certainly, after their fear, give them security in exchange; they shall worship* Me, *not associating aught with Me* (24:55). The words, *they shall worship Me* means sincere worship with the real faith, as may be inferred by the following clause, *not associating aught with Me.* We should remember that, in the eyes of Allāh, even some professed faith is in reality polytheism, as He says, *And most of them do not believe in Allāh without associating others* (with Him) (12:106). So, it is the promise of Allāh that He will cleanse the earth from every type of polytheism, and reserve it for the true believers, and then none shall be worshipped but Allāh.

Perhaps someone may say: *That promise is of divine help; Allāh shall fulfil it through a divine reformer without using manifest means like war,*

etc. But this objection cannot be upheld in view of the words, *He will certainly make them Successors.* Successors clearly means that someone is removed from his place and another one is put therein. This implies war.

Also there is the following verse:-

O you who believe! Whoever of you turns away from his religion, then soon Allāh will bring a people that He will love them and they will love Him, humble before the believers and mighty against the unbelievers, they shall strive hard (shall fight) *in the way of Allāh and will not fear censure of any censurer* (5:57). This verse implies a call to the Truth and a religious movement which will happen by divine command; and it supports the view that this promise shall be fulfilled after the call of fighting in the way of Allāh.

From the above, we may know the reply to a very common criticism of Islam. The Christian missionaries call it the religion of the sword and blood; some say that it is the religion of force and compulsion. All this, because Islam has sanctioned *jihād* (war in the way of Allāh). They say that it is totally against the character of the religious movements of the previous prophets. The previous religions relied not on the sword but on persuasion and guidance.

The above is the gist of that criticism. But the Qur'ān has explained that Islam is based on the judgement of true human nature. Humanity can only achieve its perfection if it accepts that judgement. And that nature has decreed that all individual and collective affairs should be governed by the laws which are based on the belief in one Allāh. To defend this basic principle is a prescribed right of humanity. It can only be defended by spreading it among people and protecting it from disorder and destruction. And this right must be safeguarded by all possible means. Even then, moderation is the key-word in all this venture. It begins with the Call and patiently enduring the persecution by enemies. Then comes the defence of the lives of the Muslims and Islamic territory. Lastly comes the war started by order of the divine representative to defend the above mentioned human right and protect the Creed of the Oneness of God. Whatever the type of fighting, it must be preceded by calling them to come to the right path, and that Call should be based on reason and understanding, as the Prophet used to do. Allāh says: *Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and kindly exhortation*; *and have disputation*

(discussion) *with them in the manner which is the best* (16:125). This verse is unconditional. Also, Allāh says: *That he who would perish might perish after a clear proof, and he who would live might live after a clear proof* (8:42).

There is no need to feel alarmed if *jihād* has in it an element of compulsion. When explanations, discussions and exhortations fail to bring a group of people onto the right path, and humanity is in disorder and turmoil because of that group's disregard for the basic right mentioned above, then there is no way but to compel them to come onto the right path of truth. This is the strategy adopted by all societies and states throughout the world. The outlaws who flout the laws of the state are first called to accept the authority of the state and obey its laws. Then, if they do not listen, they are compelled by all possible means to do so, even if it leads to killing and fighting.

A point to ponder: The compulsion will remain for one generation only. Coming generations will be so taught and trained that they will gladly accept the Religion of nature and the creed of the Oneness of God. It is not objectionable if one generation is compelled to see reason, if by that action all coming generations will gladly follow the right path till the end of the world.

The claim, that all the previous prophets adopted verbal persuasion as their only instrument of guidance, shows an ignorance of the facts. Most of the prophets had neither the opportunity nor the power to wage war. Read, for example, the lives of Nūḥ, Hūd and Ṣāliḥ (peace be on them all); they were under pressure from their enemies on all sides. The same was the case with 'Īsā (a.s.) when he was among his people, trying to spread his call. His call did not spread until it was too late; it spread when the period of its validity was coming to its end, near the advent of Islam.

On the other hand, the Old Testament contains the lives of many prophets who waged war in the way of Allāh. The Qur'ān also mentions some of them. Allāh says: *And how many a prophet fought with whom were myriads of Godly men; so they did not lose heart at what befell them in the way of Allāh nor did they weaken nor did they abase themselves. And Allāh loves the steadfast ones. And their saying was nothing but that they prayed, ''Our Lord! forgive us our sins, and our excesses in our affairs and make our feet firm and help us against the unbeliever people* (3:146-147). And He says, *inter alia,* describing what

happened when Mūsā called the Israilites to fight against the Palestinians: *And* (remember) *when Mūsā said unto his people: ... ‘‘O my people! Enter you the holy land which Allāh has assigned for you; and turn not on your backs, for then you will return* (as) *losers’’ ... They said, ‘‘O Mūsā! Verily we shall never enter it at all, while they remain therein. Go you and your Lord and fight you two, surely, we shall stay here sitting* (5:22-27). There is another story about the fighting of Saul and Goliath which begins with the words: *Have you not seen the chiefs of the children of Isrā’īl, after Mūsā, when they spoke to a prophet unto them* (saying), *‘‘raise up for us a king, so that we may fight in the way of Allāh ...* (2:246—251).

Then there is the story of the prophet Sulaymān and the queen of Sheba, in which Sulaymān writes to her: *That exalt not yourselves against me and come unto me in submission.* After receiving her ambassador, he threatened him, *return unto them; for we will certainly come to them with hosts which they shall have no power to resist, and we will certainly expell them out therefrom with abasement while they shall be in a state of ignominy* (27:20-44). See how Sulaymān (a.s.) called them unto right path; and when the result was not as he had expected, he threatened them to initiate a war.

FROM THE SOCIOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW

There is no doubt that every society — human beings as well as some animals — is based on the natural urge to save itself from extinction. Nature gave each species a right to make use of every thing which may help in keeping it alive. Man takes advantage of inorganic substances, plants, animals and even other human beings in every possible manner, even if it clashes with the rights of those animals or prevents organic and inorganic substances from reaching the point of their perfection. Likewise, animals make use of plants and other animals and their instinct tells them that they have a right to do so.

In the same way, nature gave them a right to defend the above right, because the right of use would not be complete without the right of defence. After all, it is an over-crowded place where every thing is in continuous struggle for its survival. Every species which is endowed with sense and movement feels that it has a natural right to protect its

rights, and is sure this defence is as lawful as the basic right itself. For proof, see how the animals defend themselves, when in conflict with others, with their armaments: horns, teeth, claws, hooves, stings, beaks, etc. Those who are not gifted with such weapons protect themselves by fleeing or hiding or pretending to be dead. Others, like monkeys and foxes save themselves by cunning and deception.

Man has been given the power of thinking, by which he can employ other things for this defence. His nature issues commands and pronounces judgements. And one of those judgements is that man has a basic right of use and also a right to defend that basic right. It is this second right which prompts him to fight and quarrel on all occasions when he feels that his right is in danger.

The basic right of taking advantage of other things is bridled by the realization that it is not only he who wants to make use of others but others also want to exercise the same right over all others. These conflicting demands counterbalance each other and man is forced to come to terms with society and to realize that he also has to serve others as he wants others to serve him. This exchange of services has to be done on the scale fixed by the society.

It is clear from the above that the conflict and struggle to defend his rights is not based on the right to use other things, because this right of use was moderated and balanced by man himself as soon as he entered society; he had to agree that he would take advantage of others only according to the service which he himself was prepared to offer to others. As a result of this mutual understanding there was no place for fighting. Fighting is based on the second right, that is the right to defend his interests. Man believes that he has a right in some thing: when he sees that that presumed right is endangered, he stands up to defend and protect it.

Thus all wars are in reality defensive. Even kings and emperors assume that they have a certain right, let us say the right to rule; they believe that they deserve to reign.

Others feel that the solution to increasing population or the economic difficulties of their country depends on the annexation of additional territories; and they believe that they have a right to do this. However absurd these pretexts may seem to others, the man who advances them really believes in them. Once he, in his mind, gives that right to himself,

he is ready to defend it, even if it means attacking others, shedding blood, creating disorder in the country and destroying land and people.

Thus the defence of the human rights is a right laid down in nature which a man is entitled to exercise. But the preceding paragraphs have made it clear that it is only a secondary right. The primary and basic right is the one of taking advantage of others.

If we have to decide whether a certain defensive action was proper, we should, first of all, see how important or proper the defended right was. We must be satisfied that the damage to society by our defensive action would not cancel or maybe even exceed the benefit of the defended right.

The Qur'ān has established that the most important human right is the belief in the oneness of God and the laws based on the divine revelation. Also, society unanimously believes that the most important was the right to live under such laws which protect the well-being of individuals.

As these two rights are the most important ones, their defence takes precedence over all other considerations.

TRADITIONS

Ibn 'Abbās said about the verse, *And fight in the way of Allāh ...*: ''This verse was revealed about the treaty of Ḥudaybiyah. And it was like this: The Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) and his companions came out in the year when they wanted to perform *'umrah.* They were one thousand and four hundred persons. They proceeded till they reached Ḥudaybiyah. There the polytheists prevented them from reaching the Sacred House. Therefore, they slaughtered their sacrificial animals at Ḥudaybiyah. The poly theists made an agreement with them that they were to go back that year; they would return for *'umrah* next year when they would be allowed to enter and remain in Mecca for three days to perform *ṭawāf* and whatever religious rites they wished.

''The (Messenger of Allāh) thereon returned to Medina. Next year the Prophet and his companions made preparations for the *'umrah* which had become *qaḍā* the previous year. At the same time, they were afraid that the Qurayshites would not honour the agreement and would again prevent them from reaching the Sacred House and would fight. The Messenger of Allāh did not like the idea of fighting with them in the

Sacred month within the sacred boundary of Mecca. Then Allāh sent down this verse.'' [*Majma'u 'l-bayān*]

The author says: Similar traditions have been written in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* with various chains from Ibn 'Abbās and others.

Another tradition from ar-Rabī' ibn Anas and 'Abdu 'r-Raḥmān ibn Zayd ibn Aslam said: This is the first verse revealed about fighting. When it was revealed, the Messenger of Allāh used to fight with those who fought with him and desisted from fighting those who refrained from fighting, until was revealed the verses, *Kill the polytheists wherever you find them.* Thus the above verse was abrogated. [*Majma'u 'l-bayān*]

The author says: It is their own opinion. You know that the verse: *Kill the polytheists wherever you find them* does not abrogate the verse *And fight in the way of Allāh* ... Rather it generalizes an order which was specific.

About the verse, *and kill them wherever you find them ...*: This verse was revealed because one of the companions killed an infidel in the sacred month. The believers condemned him for it. Then Allāh made it clear that mischief in religion, i.e. polytheism, is more grievous than killing polytheists in the sacred month, even though it was not allowed. [*Majma'u 'l-bayān*]

The author says: You know that the singleness of the context and inter-relationship of all the five verses obviously proves that they were revealed all together, not piecemeal.

There is a tradition from various chains, from Qatādah. He said: *''And fight with them until there is no more mischief,* i.e. polytheism, *and the religion be only for Allāh.''* He said: ''till it is said, 'there is none to be worshipped except Allāh.' It is this cause which the Messenger of Allāh fought for, and called the people to. And we are told that the Prophet used to say, 'Verily Allāh ordered me to fight the people till they say, ''there is none to be worshipped except Allāh'', then, if they desisted (from polytheism), there should be no hostility except against the oppressors.'' He said: ''And verily the oppressor, who refuses to say 'there is none to be worshipped except Allāh' shall be fought with till he says 'there is none to be worshipped except Allāh'.''[*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

The author says: The sentence ''And verily the oppressor ...'' is the

saying of Qatādah; he has inferred it from the saying of the Prophet and it is a fine inference.

A similar interpretation has been reported from ‘Ikrimah.

al-Bukhārī, Abu sh-Shaykh and Ibn Mardawayh have narrated from Ibn ‘Umar that two persons came to him during the *fitnah* (mischief) of Ibn az-Zubayr and told him: ‘‘Verily, people have done (what they have done) and you are the son of ‘Umar and a companion of the Prophet; then why do you not come out?’’ He (Ibn ‘Umar) said: ‘‘It prevents me (from coming out) that Allāh has forbidden (shedding) the blood of my (Muslim) brother.’’ They said: ‘‘Has not Allāh said, *fight with them until there is no* (more) mischief?’’ He said: ‘‘We fought until there was no more mischief and the religion became only of Allāh; but you want to fight until there he mischief and the religion be for other than Allāh.’’ [*ad-Durru ’l -manthūr*]

The author says: He was mistaken in the meaning of *fitnah* (الفتنة) and also the two questioners were mistaken. The meaning of *fitnah* (الفتنة) has already been explained. Theevent of Ibn az-Zubayr was not ‘‘polytheism or disbelief ’’, it was an example of disorder on earth, or fighting with one another without any just cause; and believers were not allowed to remain silent about it.

There is in *Majma‘u ’l-bayān,* under the verse, *and fight with them until there is no* (more) *mischief*: ‘‘That is polytheism’’, and the author of *Majma‘u ’l-bayān* said: ‘‘And it is narrated from Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.).’’

There is a *ḥadīth* in the *Tafsīr* of al-‘Ayyāshī about the words of Allāh: *The sacred month for the sacred month;* al-‘Ulā’ ibn al-Fuḍayl said: ‘ ‘ I asked him (the Imām) whether it was allowed to the Muslims to start fighting with the polytheists in the sacred month. He said: ‘If the polytheists start the fight with them by (practically) making it lawful (to fight in the month), then the Muslims will see how they can overcome the polytheists (and do it). And it is the word of Allāh, *The sacred month for the sacred month* and reprisal (is lawful) in all sacred things.’ ’’

Aḥmad and Ibn Jarīr, and an-Naḥḥās in his *Nāsikh,* have narrated from Jābir ibn ‘Abdullāh that he said: ‘‘The Messenger of Allāh did not fight in the sacred month until he was fought with, and if ever he was in a fight and the sacred month began, he would desist (from

fighting) until it came to an end.'' [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

Mu'āwīyah ibn 'Ammār said: ''I asked Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about a man who killed another man, outside the sacred territory and then entered the sacred territory. The Imām (a.s.) said: 'He will not be killed (therein), but he will not be given anything to eat or drink, and will not be sold anything until he comes out of the sacred territory; then he will be given the punishment of his crime'.'' The narrator said that he then asked the Imām (a.s.): ''Then what do you say about a man who killed someone in the sacred territory or stole therein. He (the Imām) said: 'He will be punished inside the sacred territory because he himself did not maintain respect of it. And Allāh has said, *whoever then acts aggressively against you, inflict the like aggression on him.'* (The Imām said) 'This is the law about the sacred territory; and Allāh said, *there should be no hostility except against the aggressors'.''* [*al-Kāfī*]

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said about the words of Allāh, *and cast not yourselves into perdition*: ''If a man spent in the way of Allāh all that he had, he would not have done good and God would not lead him to success. Does Allāh not say: *and cast not yourselves into perdition with your own hands; and do good; Verily Allāh loves those who do good,* i.e., who are economical.'' [*ibid.*]

aṣ-Ṣadūq has narrated from Thābit ibn Anas that he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh said: 'Obedience to the ruler is obligatory; and one who has left the obedience to the ruler has not obeyed Allāh and has entered into His prohibition, as He says: *and cast not yourselves into perdition with your own hands'.''*

It is narrated in *ad-Durru 'l -manthūr* with numerous chains, from Aslam Abī 'Imrān that he said: ''We were (fighting) at Constantinople; 'Aqbah ibn 'Āmir commanded the Egyptians, and Fuḍālah ibn 'Ubayd led the Syrians. There came out a big row of the Romans, and we stood in row against them. Then a man from our side attacked the Roman row until he entered in its midst. The people (Muslims) cried out, 'Glory be to Allāh! He is casting himself in perdition with his own hands!' Then Abū Ayyūb, the companion of the Messenger of Allāh, stood up and said: 'O people! You are interpreting this verse in this way, while (the fact is that) it was sent down about us, the group of the Helpers. Verily, when Allāh made His religion powerful, and its helpers increased in number, some of

us told others, keeping it secret from the Messenger of Allāh, ‘‘Verily, our properties are ruined, and (now) Allāh had made Islam powerful and its helpers have increased. Therefore, (it would be better) if we stayed in our properties and mended what had been damaged therein.’’ Then Allāh revealed to his prophet, refuting what we had said, *And spend in the way of Allāh and cast not yourselves into perdition with your own hands.* So, perdition meant our staying in our properties and repairing them by leaving fighting (in the way of Allāh)’.’’

The author says: The difference of the traditions in interpreting the meaning of this verse supports what we have said that this verse is general and covers both extremes (extravagance and miserliness) in spending, and that it is not confined to spending only, but covers other aspects also where ‘‘casting oneself into perdition’’ can be applied.

وَأَتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ أُحْصِرْتُمْ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ وَلَا تَحْلِقُوا
رُؤُوسَكُمْ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْهَدْيُ مَحِلَّهُ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَرِيضًا أَوْ بِهِ أَذًى مِنْ رَأْسِهِ
فَفِدْيَةٌ مِنْ صِيَامٍ أَوْ صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَمَنْ تَمَتَّعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ
فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ فِي الْحَجِّ وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا
رَجَعْتُمْ تِلْكَ عَشَرَةٌ كَامِلَةٌ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلُهُ حَاضِرِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ـ ١٩٦ . الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَعْلُومَاتٌ فَمَنْ
فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ وَلَا فُسُوقَ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي الْحَجِّ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ
خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمْهُ اللَّهُ وَتَزَوَّدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَى وَاتَّقُونِ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ـ ١٩٧
لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَإِذَا أَفَضْتُمْ مِنْ عَرَفَاتٍ
فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عِنْدَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ وَاذْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَاكُمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الضَّالِّينَ ـ ١٩٨ . ثُمَّ أَفِيضُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَفَاضَ النَّاسُ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا
اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ـ ١٩٩ . فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمْ مَنَاسِكَكُمْ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَذِكْرِكُمْ
آبَاءَكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ ذِكْرًا فَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَمَا لَهُ فِي
الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَاقٍ ـ ٢٠٠ . وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي
الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ـ ٢٠١ . أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا وَاللَّهُ
سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ـ ٢٠٢ . وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَنْ تَعَجَّلَ فِي
يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ وَمَنْ تَأَخَّرَ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ لِمَنِ اتَّقَى وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا
أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ـ ٢٠٣ .

And complete the ḥajj (pilgrimage) *and ʻumrah for Allāh, but if you be prevented, then* (send) *whatever offering* (sacrificial animal) *is easy to obtain, and do not Shave your heads until the offering reaches its destination; but whoever among you is sick or has an affliction in his head,*

then (he should effect) *a redemption by fasting, or alms, or sacrifice. But when you are secure* (from the hindrance) *then whoever enjoys by the 'umrah for the ḥajj,* (he should offer) *whatever offering* (sacrificial animal) *is easy to obtain; but he who cannot find* (any offering) *should fast for three days during the ḥajj* (pilgrimage) *and for seven days when you return; these* (make) *ten* (days) *perfect; this is for him whose family dwells not near the Sacred Mosque; and fear Allāh and know that Allāh is severe in requiting* (evil). (196). *Ḥajj is the months well-known; so whoever determines* (to perform) *the ḥajj therein, then there shall be no sexual intercourse, nor bad language, nor quarrelling during the ḥajj; and whatever good you do, Allāh knows it; and make provision, for surely the best provision is piety* (guarding oneself against evil)*; and fear Me, O people of understanding!* (197) *There is no blame on you if you seek bounty from your Lord; then when you march from 'Arafāt, remember Allāh near the Holy Monument, and remember Him as He has guided you, although before this you were surely of those who had gone astray.* (198) *Then march on from whence the people march on, and ask for the forgiveness of Allāh; verily, Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.* (199) *So, when you have performed your rites, then remember Allāh as you remember your fathers, rather a more Intense remembrance. For, of men there is he who says, ''Our Lord! give us in this world'', and for him there shall be no portion in the Hereafter.* (200) *And among them there is he who says, ''Our Lord! give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter and save us from the chastisement of the Fire''* (201) *They shall have* (their) *portion of what they have earned; and Allāh is quick in reckoning.* (202) *And remember Allāh during the counted number of days; then whoever hastens off in two days, there is no sin on him, and whoever tarries* (there) *there is no sin on him;* (this is) *for him who guards* (himself); *and fear Allāh, and know that you* (all) *shall be gathered together unto Him.* (203)

COMMENTARY

These verses were revealed during the last pilgrimage (*ḥajjatu 'l-widā'* حجّة الوداع) performed by the Messenger of Allāh. They promulgated the pilgrimage of enjoyment (*ḥajju 't-tamattu',* حجّ التّمتع)

Qur'ān: *And complete the hall and 'umrah for Allāh:* Completeness (*tamām,* التّمام) of a thing is the final part, when added to the other parts it makes that thing whole, the thing becomes itself; and then the expected effects follow. When a thing is started and some of its parts are assembled and then the final part is added, it is called *itmām* (completion, to complete, الاتمام). Perfection (*kamāl,* الكمال) is a condition, virtue or characteristic which creates such an effect in a complete thing which would not be found in it without that perfection. When a human foetus receives all its limbs and organs, it is its completion. When he is called knowledgeable, courageous or chaste it is his perfection.

Sometimes, completion (*tamām,* التّمام) is used metaphorically in place of perfection (*kamāl,* الكمال) to show the extreme importance of that virtue or characteristic; the speaker implies that that virtue or is not something extra or external, it is an integral part without which the thing would remain incomplete.

In this verse, the completion of *ḥajj* and *'umrah* has been used in the first (literal) sense; and it is proved by the following sentence, *but if you be prevented.* Obviously, this means prevented 'from carrying on the *ḥajj* and *'umrah* to their last rite'; in other words, 'from completing them'. It cannot mean 'prevented from perfecting them'.

Ḥajj is a well-known Islamic act of worship, started by the Prophet Ibrāhīm (a.s.). It continued among the Arabs, and Allāh promulgated it for this *ummah* as a law which would continue upto the Day of Resurrection.

This action begins with *iḥrām* and the stay in 'Arafāt and then in the Sacred Monument. The pilgrims sacrifice an animal each at Mina, throw stones on the three Stone-pillars, circumambulate around the Ka'bah, pray, and march between the Ṣafā and the Marwah. There are some other obligations as well.

Ḥajj is of three kinds: *ḥajju 'l-ifrād, ḥajju 'l-qirān* and *ḥajju 't-tamattu'.* This last one was ordained in the last days of the

Messenger of Allāh.

'Umrah is another act of worship. In *'umrah,* the pilgrims visit the House of Allāh after putting on *iḥrām* from one of the appointed places. Then they go round the Ka'bah, pray, and march between the Safa and the Marwah and finally cut off some nails or hair.

Ḥajj and *'umrah* are acts of worship and cannot be complete except when they are done for the sake of Allāh, as is seen in the sentence: *And complete the ḥajj and 'umrah for Allāh.*

Qur'ān: *but if you be prevented ... offering reaches its destination: iḥṣār* (الأحصار) means to prevent, to obstruct. The verse refers to being prevented from completing the *ḥajj* or *'umrah,* after *iḥrām,* because of an ailment or enemy. *Istīsār* (الأستيسار) of a thing means its becoming easy, not difficult; this paradigm implies that that thing acquires easiness for itself . *Hady* (الهدى) means the animal presented by one man to another or to a place, to seek someone's pleasure with it. It is derived from *hadyah* (gift, present, الهدية); or from *hudā* (to lead to destination,). It is used in both masculine and feminine forms, *hady* (الهدى) and *hadyah* (الهدية) like *tamr* (التّمر) and *tamrah* (date, التّمرة). Here it means the animals brought or led by the pilgrims for sacrifice during the *ḥajj.*

Qur'ān: *but whoever among you be sick ... or sacrifices:* This sentence is an offshoot of the preceding one, *do not shave your heads* ... It implies that the sickness refers to only that one in which the man would suffer if his head were not shaved.

or has an affliction in his head: The conjunctive ''or'' shows that the affliction here means a suffering other than sickness, like vermin. It figuratively means to be afflicted with vermin, e.g., lice. These two things (sickness and lice) make it lawful to shave the head; but a redemption should be effected by any of the three ways: fast, alms or sacrifice.

It is narrated in a tradition that the fast is for three days; the alms are to feed six poor persons, and the sacrifice is one goat.

Qur'ān: *But when you are secure* (from the hindrance), *then whoever enjoys by the 'umrah for the ḥajj*: It is an offshoot of the sentence: *if you be prevented.* The meaning is: When you are safe from all hindrances like sickness, an enemy or other such things, *then whoever enjoys by 'umrah for the ḥajj* — i.e. enjoys because of *'umrah.*

How does one enjoy because of ‘umrah? It is because *‘umrah* is completed and the restrictions of *iḥrām* are lifted until the time comes to wear *iḥrām* again for *ḥajj.* Therefore, by (*bi,* ب) in by *‘umrah* (*bi ’l-‘umrah,* بالعمرة) is causative. How does *‘umrah* cause enjoyment? It is because when *‘umrah* is completed, the restrictions of *iḥrām* like women, perfume, etc. are lifted, and one may enjoy them till the time comes for the *iḥrām* of *ḥajj.*

Qur’ān: (he should offer) *whatever offering is easy to obtain*: Obviously, the sacrifice of the animal is an independent rite. It is not a substitute to make up for not wearing *iḥrām* of *ḥajj* from an appointed place; as it puts un-called for strain on the mind to infer such a meaning from this verse.

Someone might say: (he should offer) *whatever offering is easy to obtain is* based on: *then whoever enjoys by the ‘umrah,* just as an effect is based on. its condition. In other words, the offering of the sacrifice is prescribed because of the enjoyment. Moreoever, the word *enjoyment* mentioned in the conditional clause hints that the sacrifice is a recompense of that enjoyment which was allowed to lighten the burden and hardship of pilgrims, and the sacrifice compensates for it.

The author says: The above argument is refuted by the phrase, *by the ‘umrah,* i.e. because the enjoyment is allowed after the *‘umrah* comes to its end. The argument of lightening the burden could be advanced only if the enjoyments were allowed during the *‘umrah.* But how can the words *lightening the burden* be used in this case when the *‘umrah* is already completed and the restrictions of *iḥrām* terminated; and when the *iḥrām* of *ḥajj* is yet to start?

And if there is any hint, it is only that the sacrificing of the animal has been prescribed because of the ordination of enjoyment by the *‘umrah for the ḥajj.* There is no hint whatsoever in it that the sacrifice is to compensate for not doing *iḥrām* of *ḥajj* from the appointed place (*mīqāt,* الميقات) outside Mecca.

Apparently the verse, *then whoever enjoys by the ‘umrah for the ḥajj,* (he should offer) *whatever offering is easy to obtain,* mentions *ḥajju ’t-tamattu‘* (حجّ التّمتّع) as an already prescribed act of worship. It is not the original and initial ordination. It mentions enjoyment (*tamattu‘,* التّمتّع) as an established fact and then, on the basis of it, prescribes the sacrifice of the animal. It says, *whosoever performs ḥajju’t-tamattu‘, shall offer a sacrifice.* It does not say, ‘‘performs *ḥajju’t-tamattu‘* and offer a sacrifice’’.

The original and initial prescription of *tamattu‘* comes in the verse which comes later, *this is for him whose family dwells not near the Sacred Mosque.*

Qur’ān: *but he who cannot find* (any offering) *should fast for three days during the ḥajj and for seven days when you return.*

Ḥajj is mentioned as the time of the fast because the time and place of both are the same. The time of *ḥajj* — from the *iḥrām* of *ḥajj to* the returning from it — is the very time of the three days’fast. There are traditions from the Imāms of *Ahlu ’l-bayt* that the time of this fast is before the Day of Sacrifice (10th *Dhu ’l-ḥijjah*) or, if one could not fast at that time then, after the 13th of *Dhu ’l-ḥijjah,* or, as a last alternative, at the time of returning to one’s home.

The time of the seven-day fast is after returning to one’s home, as is clear from the words, *when you return.* It should be noted that Allāh did not say, ‘‘at the time of returning’’. Moreover, the change of pronoun from the (previously used) third person to the second person in *when you return* is a hint that the hearer is now present - at home.

Qur’ān: *these* (make) *ten* (days) *perfect*: Three and seven together make ten perfect days. The seven days make perfect the previous three days; they do not complete it. The difference between perfection and completion has been explained in the beginning of the verse; and it means that both groups of three and seven days have separate identities with separate rules. The fast of three days is a complete act in itself; it depends on the fast of seven days for its perfection, not completion.

Qur’ān: *this is for him whose family dwells not near the Sacred Mosque:* This order of *enjoying by the ‘umrah for the ḥajj* is for the non-resident, i.e. the person who dwells not less than twelve miles away from the Sacred Mosque. His family (*ahluh,* اهله) here means his dependents, like his wife and children. The non-resident has been described as he *whose family dwells not near the Sacred Mosque.* It is a very fine way of expression as it not only promulgates the law but explains its reason also; and that reason is to lighten the burden. The pilgrims who come from far off places for the *ḥajj* have to undergo all kinds of troubles, hardships and difficulties during the journey; and when they reach Mecca, they are tired and worn out. They naturally need a place to rest and recuperate. Usually, one gets this rest with his family, but here is a pilgrim *whose family dwells not near the Sacred Mosque.* Therefore, Allāh ordained for him enjoyment (*tamattu‘,* التّمتّع); he

may enjoy himself after completing the *'umrah* upto the time of *ḥajj* and then may raise his voice in *talbiyah* (التلبيه), i.e. he may wear the *iḥrām* of *ḥajj* from the Sacred Mosque without going back to an appointed place for that purpose.

It has been explained earlier that it is this sentence that promulgates *ḥajju 't-tamattu';* it is a general ordinance, and is not limited to a particular time, or to a particular person, or to a particular situation. It is for all the non-resident pilgrims, for all times, and for all situations.

Qur'ān: *and fear Allāh and know that Allāh is severe in requiting*: This extreme severity in this humiliating way shows that there was a likelihood of the audience rejecting this order or hesitating to follow it. And this is what actually happened. Of all the laws of Islam, *ḥajj* had already been practised by the Arabs since the days of Ibrāhīm and all its rites were well-known to, and performed by, them. They were used to those rites, and when Islam came, it let it be, as it was, until the last days of the Prophet's life. Therefore, it was not an easy thing to make any change in its method; they were not expected to accept any change in it willingly. That is why they protested against the law of *enjoyment by 'umrah* and, as the traditions show, many of them did not welcome that order. So much so that the Prophet felt a pressing need to deliver a lecture telling them that the authority was from Allāh only, He ordains as He wishes, and that it was a general order, nobody was exempted from it - neither the Prophet nor the *ummah.* This explains why the verse ended on such a harsh note, ordering them to fear Allāh and threatening them with the chastisement of Allāh.

Qur'ān: *ḥajj is the months well-known; ... nor quarrelling during the ḥajj: ḥajj* at the beginning of the verse means ''the time of *ḥajj*''. ''Well-known'', i.e., to the Muslims; and the *sunnah* has explained it as *Shawwāl, Dhu 'l-qa'dah* and *Dhu 'l-ḥijjah.* So far as *Dhu 'l-ḥijjah* is concerned, it is only about a half of the month which is the time of *ḥajj;* but there is no objection to counting it as one of the ''months'' of *ḥajj.*

We say: ''The time of our reaching Mecca is Friday''. But we reach there at a certain hour and minute, not during the whole day.

The noun *ḥajj* has been repeated three times in this verse. Why was the pronoun not used, which could have shortened the sentence? The fact is that the sentence has been shortened by using the noun instead of the pronouns: *ḥajj is the months ...* means ''the time of *ḥajj''; whoever*

determines the ḥajj means the action itself ; *nor quarrelling during the hajj* refers to ‘‘the duration and place of *ḥajj.* If the noun had not been repeated, it would have been necessary to lengthen the sentence to make the meaning clear.

so whoever determines the ḥajj therein: *faraḍa fi hinna ’l-ḥajj* (فرض فيهنّ الحجّ) literally means ‘makes *ḥajj* obligatory therein’; and it implies, ‘‘makes *ḥajj* obligatory for himself by beginning its rites’’, because Allāh says, *And complete the ḥajj and ‘umrah for Allāh.* Therefore, once one starts the *ḥajj,* it is obligatory on one to complete it.

Rafath (الرّفث) as mentioned in an earlier verse, literally means to say clearly such words which are generally unmentionable: *fusūq* (الفسوق) means ‘‘disobedience’’ and *jidāl* (الجدال) is ‘‘disputation in the talk’’. But *sunnah* has explained that in this verse *rafath* (الرّفث) means sexual inter course; *fusūq* (الفسوق) is lie; and *jidāl* (الجدال) is swearing by the name of Allāh — ‘No, by God’,‘Yes, by God’.

Qur’ān: *and whatever you do, Allāh knows it*: It is a reminder that one’s actions are not hidden from Allāh; it calls one to piety and fear of Allāh, so that one’s acts of worship might not be devoid of the spirit of devotion; so that one might not go through the external rites of worship with one’s mind absent and one’s heart forgetful. This is, generally, the style of the Qur’ān in all subjects. You will find it explaining the fundamentals of the faith, narrating the stories of previous peoples, or promulgating laws; but whatever the subject, it is invariably followed by a lesson and an admonition so that knowledge is not without practice. Knowledge without practice has no value in Islam. That is why this exhortation to piety and fear of God was immediately followed by the words, *and fear Me, O people of understanding.* In the preceding sentence the name of Allāh was mentioned in the third person (*Allāh knows it*) but immediately it is changed to the first person (*fear* Me) — it is to show the utmost importance of piety, and to imply that the pious person has not reached nearer to Allāh and is now directly addressed by Him.

Qur’ān: *There is no blame on you if you seek bounty from your Lord:* It is like the words of Allāh: *O you who believe! when the call is made for prayer on Friday, then hasten to the remembrance of Allāh and leave off trading ... And when the prayer is ended then disperse in the land and seek of the grace of Allāh...* (62:9—10). The *trading* of the

first verse was changed to the *seeking of bounty of Allāh* in the next one, showing that both are the same. That is why the sunnah has interpreted the words, *seek the bounty of Allāh* in the verse under discussion as ''the trading''. This verse proves that trading during the pilgrimage is lawful.

Qur'ān: *then when you march from 'Arafāt, remember Allāh near to the Holy Monumen t: ifāḍah* (الافاضة) means going out from a place in a group. This verse, therefore, describes the stay at 'Arafāt as well as the stay at the Sacred Monument, i.e. *al-muzdalafah* (المزدلفة).

Qur'ān: *and remember Him as He has guided you* ... Remember Him intensely enough to be like His guidance to you, although before His guidance you were surely of those who had gone astray.

Qur'ān: *Then march on from whence the people march on:* The verse makes it compulsory to march on as ''the people'' were doing, and obliges the immediate audience to follow ''the people''. This supports the reports that the Qurayshites and their allies (together known as *ḥums,* الحمس) did not stay at 'Arafāt; instead they went direct to *al-muzdalafah* and stayed therein, claiming that they were the people of the sacred territory of Allāh and, therefore, they would not leave that boundary. Allāh, therefore, ordered them to march on (to *al-muzdalafah*) from whence the other people march on, i.e. from 'Arafāt. In other words, the Qurayshites also must stay at 'Arafāt and then march on from there with others.

That being the case, why did Allāh mention this order after the order to march from 'Arafāt, and begin it with then (*thumma,* ثمّ)? This sentence has been figuratively written as a sort of *istidrāk* (to catch up what had escaped, استدراک). The meaning thus, will be: ''The rules of *ḥajj* are as mentioned above, except that you are obliged to stay at, and march on from, 'Arafāt, not *al-muzdalafah.''*

Qur'ān: *So, when you have performed ... intense remembrance:* It is a call to remember Allāh with utmost intensity. The pilgrim should remember Him as he remembers his forefathers, or even more intensely. The grace of Allāh on him (i.e. the grace of guidance, as He mentioned it just above, *remember Him as He has guided you) is* far greater than the right of his forefathers upon him.

It has been said that the Arabs, in the days of ignorance, used to stay at Mina after the rites of *ḥajj* to boast vainly about their forefathers, in lectures and poetry. Allāh by this verse changed it to His own remembrance.

Aw (or, أو) in *aw ashadda dhikran* (or a more intense remembrance, أو اشدّ ذكرا) is used in the meaning of ‘‘rather’’. The *remembrance* should be ‘‘tense’’. Remembrance may be intense (in quality) or frequent (in quantity). See, for example, the following verses where the adjective of quantity *kathīran* (much, frequently, كثيرا) has been used: *remember Allāh, remembering frequently,* (33:35); *and the men who remember Allāh much* (33:35). Remembrance of Allāh, in reality, is not by words alone. It is a thing concerned with the heart and mind; words are merely a demonstration of that feeling. Therefore, it may be described as frequent (in quantity), if one remembers Allāh most of the time, as the Qur’ān says: *Those who remember Allāh standing and sitting and reclining on their sides ...* (3:191). And it may be described as intense (in quality) at some other times. As remembrance was ordered for a time (*when you have finished your rites*) when one is liable to divert one’s attention from Allāh and forget Him, it was appropriate to use the adjective ‘‘more intense’’ rather than ‘‘more frequent’’.

Qur’ān: *For, of men there is he who says ... what they have earned.* It is based on the sentence: *then remember Allāh as you remember your fathers, rather a more intense remembrance. Nās* (men, people, النّاس) is general; it describes all human beings, the unbelievers as well as the believer — the unbelievers who only remembers his forefathers. In other words, he only wants the vainglories of this world, only seeks material greatness, and has no concern with the Hereafter. And there is the believer who only seeks the pleasure of Allāh, and even when he wants something from this world, he wants only that which his Lord is pleased to bestow upon him.

In view of above explanations, it is clear that the word *says* in both places does not mean asking or saying in so many Words. It means ‘wanting’ by one’s state and inner feeling. Thus, the verses mean that some people do not ‘‘want’’ anything except this world, and they shall have no portion in the Here after; and there are others who do not seek anything except what Allāh is pleased to give them whether it be in this world or in the Hereafter; and they shall have their portion in the Hereafter.

Good (*ḥasanah,* الحسنة) *is* mentioned in the saying of the believers but not in that of the unbelievers. It is no secret that the one who wants this world, does not care whether it is good in the eyes of Allāh or not.

The whole world is sweet and good, in his thinking, if it satisfies his desire and if he can enjoy it. It is diametrically opposed to the thinking of the believer who wants the Hereafter. As the Hereafter will be either good or bad, he only wants and only asks for, the good, and not the bad.

The contrast between the sentences, *and for him there shall be no portion in the Hereafter* and *they shall have* (their) *portion of what they have earned,* shows that the deeds of the first groups (but not of the second) shall be void and forfeited. Allāh has said; *And We will proceed to what they have done of deeds, so We shall render them like dust scattered in air,* (25:23); *And on the day when those who disbelieve shall be brought before the fire*: *You did away with your good things in your life of the world and you took your fill of pleasure in them* ... (46:20); *so their deeds become void and We will not assign to them any weight on the Day of Resurrection* (18:105).

Qur'ān: *and Allāh is quick in reckoning: sari'u 'l-ḥisāb* (quick of reckoning, سريع الحساب) is one of the names of Allāh. Its generality suggests that it covers this world as well as the Hereafter. Even now the reckoning is in progress; whenever a man does any good or bad deed, Allāh gives him its full recompense.

In short, the purpose of these two verses is to exhort people to remember Allāh. Men are of two types: Some want this world, and do not know or remember anything else; such persons have no portion in the Hereafter. And there are others who want what God is pleased to give them; they shall have their share in the Hereafter; and Allāh is quick in reckoning - He quickly reckons what His servant wants, and recompenses him according to his wish. Therefore, you should remember Allāh so that you may be among those who will get their portion in the Hereafter; do not join that group which does not remember Allāh and, therefore, will have no portion. Otherwise, you will be disappointed on that day.

Qur'ān: *And remember Allāh during the counted number of days:* The counted days are the days of brightness, i.e., the 11th, 12th and 13th of *Dhu 'l-ḥijjah.* The proof that these counted days are after the 10th of *Dhu 'l-ḥijjah is* that this order has been given when all the rites of *ḥajj* have already been mentioned. The proof that they are three days may be found in the next sentence, *then whoever hastens off in two days.* One may ''hasten off'' in two days only when the original number of days is three.

And the traditions also have interpreted it in the same way.

Qur'ān: *then whoever hastens ... him who guards* (himself): No (*lā,* لا) here is for negation of a genus. There is no sin on him (*lā ithma 'alayh* لا اثم عليه) mentioned in the two sentences means that the pilgrim is free from the genus of sin, i.e. from all sin. Had Allāh meant to say that there would be no sin on the pilgrim in hastening off or in tarrying therein, the sentences would have contained some words to show it; but they are unconditional. Therefore, the verse means that the pilgrim who performs the rites of *ḥajj* is forgiven all his sins, there remains no sin on him whether he hastens off in two days or tarries therein.

It appears from the above that the aim of this verse is not to show that the pilgrim has an option between hastening off and tarrying; its purpose is to declare that all the sins of the pilgrim are forgiven in either case.

The words: (this is) *for him who guards* (himself), are not related to the forgiveness of .sins; otherwise it would have been ''on him who guards (himself)'', not ''for him''. Apparently it is like a previous sentence, *this is for him whose family dwells not near the Sacred Mosque.* As that sentence pointed to the group which shall be governed by the law of *enjoying by 'umrah,* likewise, the words, *for him who guards,* specify those who have the option of hastening off or tarrying therein. This option is for him who guards himself; if someone did not guard himself, then it is not for him. It follows that the guarding here is confined to guarding against those things which Allāh has forbidden during *ḥajj.* In other words, the meaning is this: This choice is given to him who guards himself from the things forbidden during the *iḥrām.* If he was not careful then he must stay a full three days at Mina and remember Allāh in those counted days. This meaning has been given in some of the traditions of the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt.*

Qur'ān: *and fear Allāh ... gathered together unto Him:* The topic ends on the order to fear Allāh and on the reminder that all shall be resurrected and gathered unto Him. Piety and fear of Allāh cannot be complete, and sins not avoided, unless one remembers the Day of Recompense. Allāh says: *Those who go astray from the path of Allāh, for them shall surely be a severe punishment, because they forgot the Day of Reckoning* (38:26).

The choice *of* the word *tuḥsharūn* (you shall be gathered to gether, تحشرون) at the end of the topic of *ḥajj* (where people assemble and

gather together from all parts of the world) is highly suitable. Also, it gives a hint that when the pilgrim, at the time of his *ḥajj,* sees the gathering and marching together, he should remember the Day when Allāh will gather them together and will not leave any one of them behind.

TRADITIONS

There is a tradition from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the words of Allāh, *And complete the ḥajj and ʻumrah for Allāh.* He said: ''They are obligatory.'' [*at-Tahdhīb* and al-ʻAyyāshī]

There is a tradition narrated by Zurārah, Ḥimrān and Muḥammad ibn Muslim from Abū Jaʻfar and Abū ʻAbdillāh (peace be on them). They said: ''We asked both Imāms about the words of Allāh, *And complete the ḥajj and ʻumrah for Allāh.* Both replied: ʻVerily, it is the completion of *ḥajj* that one should not indulge in sexual intercourse, nor in bad language nor in quarrelling'.'' [al-ʻAyyāshī]

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said in a tradition, *inter alia:* ''(Allāh) means by their (*ḥajj's* and *ʻumrah's*) completion, performing them and guarding oneself from the things which a pilgrim in condition of *iḥrām* should guard against.'' [*al-Kāfī*]

The author says: There is no conflict in these traditions and the meaning *of* completion (*itmām,* الاتمام) explained by us in the beginning, because their being obligatory and their performance is the same as completing them.

al-Ḥalabī narrates from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said: ''Verily, when the Messenger of Allāh performed the last pilgrimage (*ḥajj*)*,* he proceeded (from Medina) on the 26th of *Dhu 'l-qaʻdah,* until he reached (the Mosque of) Shajarah (which is the *mīqāt* (الميقات) i.e. appointed place of *iḥrām* for pilgrims from Medina) and prayed there. Then he led his camel till he reached the desert (i.e. open space) and he re-affirmed the intention (*niyyah,* النية) of the *iḥrām* there and said *labbayk Allāhumma labbayk* ...(*talbiyah,* التّلبية) of *ḥajj,* and drove a hundred camels (*of* sacrifice); and (likewise) all the people put on the *iḥrām* of *ḥajj;* they did not have the intention of *ʻumrah,* and knew nothing about *mutʻah* (enjoyment of *ʻumrah,* المتعة). When the Messenger of Allāh reached Mecca, he circumambulated the House and the people circumambulated

with him; then he prayed two *rak'ah* near the Stand of Ibrāhīm and kissed the (Black) Stone. Then he said : 'I begin with what Allāh has begun with'. So, he came to (the hill of) Ṣafā and began from there and went between Ṣafā and Marwah seven times. When he finished his perambulation at Marwah, he stood up before them to give a lecture. (In that lecture he ordered them to end their *iḥrām,* and treat it (the rites performed so far) as *'umrah ;* and that it was a system ordained by Allāh. So the people ended their *iḥrām.* The Messenger of Allāh told them that had he advanced from his affairs what he had delayed (i.e. had he known this system before) he also would have done as they were doing but he could not do so because he had led his sacrificial animals with him and Allāh had said: *and do not shave your heads till the offering reaches its destination.* Surāqah ibn Ja'tham al-Kinānī said: 'We have learned our religion as though we were born today. Do you think that this system which you have taught us is only for this year? Or for every year?' The Messenger of Allāh said: 'No. It is for eternity.' And another man stood up and said: 'O Messenger of Allāh! Shall we go out for *ḥajj* (on 8th of *Dhu 'l-ḥijjah*) and our heads shall be wet (by obligatory bath) because of going unto our women?' The Messenger of Allāh said: 'Verily, you shall never believe in it'.''

The Imām said: ''Then 'Alī (a.s.) proceeded from Yemen till he reached (Mecca near the time of) *ḥajj;* and found that Fāṭimah had ended her *iḥrām,* and felt the smell of perfume. So, he went to the Messenger of Allāh, to enquire about it. The Messenger of Allāh asked him: 'O 'Alī! On what did you raise your voice in *talbiyah* (التّلبية) (i.e. what was the intention of your *ḥajj*)?' He said: '(My intention was) according to the intention of the Prophet.' So, the Messenger of Allāh told him: 'Then you do not end your *iḥrām'.* Then the Prophet gave him a share in his sacrificial animals, he gave him thirty seven and sacrificed himself sixty-three, slaughtering them by his own hand. He took a portion from each sacrifice, put all portions in one pot, and ordered it to be cooked. He ate from it and sipped a little of its soup and said: 'Now we have eaten from all of them. And *ḥajju 't-tamattu'* (*mut'ah,* المتعة) is better than *ḥajju 'l-qirān* in which the pilgrim leads his sacrificial animal, and better than *ḥajju 'l-ifrād.' ''* The narrator says: ''I asked the Imām whether the Messenger of Allāh began his *iḥrām* at night in the day-time.The Imām said: 'At day-time'. Then I

asked, at what time.The Imām said ‘At the prayer of noon (*ẓuhr*,الظّهر)!’ [*al-Kāfī*]

The author says: This matter has been reported in *Majma‘u ’l-bayān* and other books also.

There is a tradition from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said: ‘‘The *‘umrah* has entered into *ḥajj* upto the Day of Resurrection. Then whoever enjoys by *‘umrah* for the *ḥajj* (he should offer) whatever offering (sacrificial animal) is easy to obtain. Now, no one has any option but to perform *ḥajju ’t-tamattu ‘,* because Allāh sent it down in his book and it was started by the traditions of the Messenger of Allāh.’’[*at-Tahdhīb*]

There is from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the word of Allāh, *whatever offering is easy to obtain,* that it is ‘‘a goat’’. [*al-Kāfī*]

There is from the same Imām that he was asked what was the one doing *ḥajj al-tamattu‘* to do if he did not get a goat. He said: ‘‘He will fast before the day of *tarwiyah* (8th of *Dhu ’l-ḥijjah,* التّروية) and on the day of the *tarwiyah* and the day of *‘arafah* (9th of *Dhu ’l-ḥijjah,* العرفة)’’He was told: ‘‘(Suppose) he reached there on the very day of *tarwiyah.’’* He replied: ‘‘He shall fast three days after *tashrīq* (i.e. after 13th, التّشريق).’’ He was asked: ‘‘What if his camel-driver did not stay there?’’The Imām said: ‘‘He shall fast on the day of *ḥaṣabah* (الحصبة) and the following two days’’. It was asked: ‘‘And what is *ḥaṣabah*?’’ He said: ‘‘The day of his (return) journey.’’ It was said: ‘‘Will he fast when he is on a journey?’’ He said: ‘‘Yes. Is he not on journey on the day of *‘arafah* (العرفة)? Verily, we the *Ahlu ’l-bayt* say so. Allāh says, *should fast for three days during the ḥajj.* Allāh means in *Dhu ’l-ḥijjah.’’* [*ibid.*]

ash-Shaykh has narrated from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said: ‘‘Whatever is after the *mīqāt* upto Mecca, (its inhabitants) is the dweller of the Sacred Mosque and for him there is no *ḥajju ’t-tamattu* ‘ (*mut‘ah,* المتعة).’’

The author says: It means that the residence of the area from the appointed place of *iḥrām* up to Mecca come under the term ‘‘dwellers of the Sacred Mosque’’ and they cannot do *ḥajju ’t-tamattu‘.* And there are numerous traditions of the same meaning from the Imāms of *Ahlu ’l-bayt.*

There is a tradition from al-Bāqir (a.s.) about the word of Allāh: *ḥajj is the months well-known,* that he said: *‘‘Ḥajj* is in the months well-known, *Shawwāl* and *Dhu ’l-qad‘dah* and *Dhu ’l-ḥijjah.* Nobody can perform *ḥajj* in other months.’’ [*al-Kāfī*]

And there is a tradition from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the words of Allāh:

so *whoever determines* (to perform) *ḥajj therein,* that *farḍ* (obligation, determination, الفرض) is (by) *talbiyah* (labbayk Allāhumma labbayk, التّلبية) and *ish'ār* (putting some recognised signs on the sacrificial animals,الاشعار) and *taqlid* (putting a string on its neck, التّقليد). Whichever of these the pilgrim does, he determines to perform the *ḥajj.''* [*ibid.*]

And ther eis in the same book from the same Imām under the word of Allāh, *There shall be no uttering unmentionable words...* that *rafath* (الرّفث) means sexual intercourse, *fusūq* (الفسوق) means a lie or abuse and *jidāl* (الجدال) is saying, 'No, by God'; 'Yes, by God'.

It is narrated from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the words of Allāh, *There is no blame on you if you seek bounty from your Lord,* that the bounty (*faḍl,* الفضل) here means sustenance. When the pilgrim has ended his *iḥrām* and performed his rites then he may purchase and sell in that season. [al-'Ayyāshī]

The author says: It is said that according to their belief, trading during the season of *ḥajj* was a sin; so Allāh removed this misunderstanding with this verse.

''And it is said that it means that there is no blame on you if you seek forgiveness from your Lord. This meaning has been narrated by Jābir from Abū Ja'far (a.s.).'' [*Majma'u 'l-bayān*]

The author says: This tradition looks at ''bounty'' in its generality and interprets it with its best example.

There is a tradition from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the word of Allāh, *Then march on from whence the people march on.* He said: ''Verily, the people of the *ḥaram* (the Quraysh) used to stay at the Sacred Mosque and other people used to stay at 'Arafāt, and (the Quraysh) did not march on from there until the people of 'Arafāt came in sight (coming from 'Arafāt). There was a man, with the patronymic, Abū Sayyār; he had a fast donkey and always went ahead of the people of 'Arafāt. When he came into sight they said, 'Here is Abū Sayyār' and then started marching on. So, Allāh ordered them (i.e. the people of *ḥaram*) that they must stay at 'Arafāt and march on from there.'' [al-'Āyyāshī]

The author says: There are other traditions with this meaning.

There is a tradition from the same Imām about the words of Allāh: *Our Lord! give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter.* He said: ''The pleasure of Allāh and the Garden in the Hereafter, and increase in sustenance and good disposition in this world.''

And also he said: ''The pleasure of Allāh, and increase in sustenance and good company; and in the Hereafter, the Garden.''

And 'Alī (a.s.) said: ''Good in this world is a virtuous wife and good in the Hereafter is the hour; and the chastisement of the Fire is a bad (ill-tempered) wife.'' [*ibid.*]

The author says: These traditions give some examples; otherwise the verse is general. The pleasure of Allāh can be got even in this world, although its complete manifestation will be in the Hereafter. That is why it may be counted as a good in this world (1st tradition) as well as in the Hereafter (2nd tradition).

There is a tradition from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the word of Allāh, *and remember Allāh during the counted number of days.* He said: ''and they are the days of brightness (*tashrīq,* التشريق) (the. 11th, 12th and 13th of Lunar month). When the Arabs stayed at Mina after sacrificing the animals, they used to boast against one another. One would say: 'My father used to do this and that.' So Allāh said: *when you have performed your rites, then remember Allāh as you remember your fathers, rather a more intense remembrance.''* He further said: ''And the *takbīr is Allāhu akbar, Allāhu akbar, la ilāha illallāhu wa'llāhu akbar, wa lillahi 'l-ḥamd, Allāhu akbar 'alā mā hadānā, Allāhu akbar 'alā mā razaqanā min bahīmati 'l-an'ām.''* [*al-Kāfī*]

The same Imām said: ''And the *takbīr* is in the days of brightness from the prayer of noon on the day of sacrifice till the prayer of dawn on the third day. And in (other) towns *takbīr* would be (recited) after ten prayers.'' [*ibid.*]

About the word of Allāh, *then whoever hastens off in two days, there is no sin on him, and whoever tarries* (there) *there is no sin on him,* that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) was asked about it, and he said: ''It does not mean that he has the option to do like this if he wishes. But it means that he returns (from *ḥajj*) and his sins are forgiven, there is no sin on him. '' [*Man lā yahḍuruhu 'l faqīh*]

And there is a tradition from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said: ''He returns and his sins are forgiven, there is no sin on him, (this is) for him who guards (himself).'' [al-'Ayyāshī]

And there is in *al-Faqīh* from the same Imām about the word of Allāh, (this is) *for him who guards* (Himself). He said: ''He shall guard himself against hunting till the people of Mina return (from it).''

And al-Bāqir (a.s.) said: ''(This is) for him who guards himself against sexual intercourse and bad language and quarrelling and those

things which Allāh has forbidden in *iḥrām.*''

Also he said: ''for him who fears Allāh.''

And aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''for him who guards himself against big sins.''

The author says: The meaning of the sentence has already been explained. But it is possible to interpret *taqwā* (piety, fear of Allāh, التّقوى) in its general meaning, as has been done in the last two traditions.

TRADITIONS ON MUT'ATU 'L-ḤAJJ

al-Bukhārī and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that he was asked about *ḥajju 't-tamattu'* (*mut'atu 'l-ḥ ajj,* متعة الحجّ). He said: ''The Emigrants (*muḥājirīn*) and the Helpers (*anṣār*) and the wives of the Prophet raised their voices in *talbiyah* (i.e. put on *iḥrām*) in the last pilgrimage, and we did likewise. When we reached Mecca, the Messenger of Allāh said: 'Make (i.e. change) your intention of *ḥajj* into that of *'umrah,* except the one who has put string on his sacrificial animal.' So we circumambulated the House and (arched) between Ṣafā and Marwah; (then we ended our *iḥrām*) and went to the women and put on (sewn) clothes. And the prophet said: 'He who put string on the sacrificial animal shall not end his *iḥrām* until the sacrifice reaches (its destination).' Then he ordered us on the eve of *tarwiyah* (8th of *Dhu 'l-ḥijjah*) to raise our voice in *talbiyah* to wear the *iḥrām* of *ḥajj.* When we finished the rites (upto Mina), we came and circumambulated the House and (marched) between Ṣafā. and Marwah and our *ḥajj* was completed. And on us was a sacrifice, as Allāh said: *Whatever offering is easy to obtain, but he who cannot find should fast for three days during the ḥajj and for seven days when you return* to your towns; and a goat is enough. Thus the pilgrims combined the two rites, *ḥajj* and *'umrah,* in one year. For, verily Allāh sent it down in His Book, and His prophet promulgated it and made it lawful for all people except the people of Mecca. Allāh has said: *this is for him whose family dwells not near the Sacred Mosque.* And the months of *ḥajj,* which Allāh has mentioned, are *Shawwāl, Dhu 'l-qa'dah* and *Dhu 'l -ḥijjah.* Therefore, he who performs *mut'atu 'l-ḥajj* in these months, on him is a sacrifice or the (10 days') fast. And *rafath* (الرّفث) is sexual intercourse, and

fusūq (الفسوق) is sins and *jidāl* (الجدال) is quarrelling.'' [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

al-Bukhārī and Muslim have narrated from Ibn 'Umar tha he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh, in the last pilgrimage, enjoye (by the *'umrah* for the *ḥajj,* and offered the sacrifice. He led the sacrificial animals with him from *Dhu 'l-ḥalīfah.* And the Messenger of Allāh began and raised his voice in *talbiyah* (i.e. put on *iḥrām*) of *'umrah.* Later on, he raised his voice in *talbiyah* (i.e. put on *iḥrām*) of *ḥajj.* And the people enjoyed with the Prophet by the *'umrah* for the *ḥajj.* Some people had taken their sacrificial animals with them, others had not done so. When the Prophet reached Mecca he told the people: 'Anyone of you who has led his sacrificial animal with him, (shall not end his *iḥrām* and) no such thing, which was forbidden for him, shall be allowed to him until he performs his *ḥajj.* And he who has not taken his sacrifice with him, he will go around the House, and (march) between Ṣafā and Marwah, and cut some hair or nails, and his *iḥrām* will come to end; then later he will raise his voice in *talbiyah* (i.e. will put on *iḥrām*) *of ḥajj;* and if he cannot find an offering, he will fast for three days during the *ḥajj* and for seven (days) when he returns to his family.' '' [*ibid.*]

al-Hākim has narrated (and said that it is ''correct'') through Mujāhid and 'Aṭā', from Jābir that he said: ''There are many people talking (without knowing the facts). We came out (from Medina) for *ḥajj.* When only a few days remained for our *iḥrām* to come to an end, we were ordered to (then and there) finish our *iḥrām.* We said, 'Well, shall one go to 'Arafāt (at the beginning of *ḥajj*) with one's penis dripping semen?' This talk reached the Messenger of Allāh, so he stood up to deliver a lecture, and said: 'O people! Do you (want to) teach me about Allāh? For, by Allāh, I am the most knowledgeable of you about Allāh, and the most God-fearing of you. And had I advanced my affair which I kept behind, I would not have taken any sacrifice with me and would have ended my *ihrām* as they had done. Then (at the time of *ḥajj*) he who did not have any sacrificial animal would fast for three days in the *ḥajj* and for seven (days) when he returns to his family; and he who had found animal would slaughter it. Thus, we slaughtered animals for seven days.''' Aṭā' said that Ibn 'Abbās said: ''Surely, the Messenger of Allāh distributed sheep and goats among his companions that day; and Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ received a he-goat and slaughtered it on his own behalf.''[*ibid.*]

Ibn Abī Shaybah, al-Bukhārī and Muslim have narrated from ‘Imrān ibn Ḥaṣīn that he said: ‘‘The verse of *mut‘ah* came down in the Book of Allāh and we did it in the company of the Messenger of Allāh, then there did not come down any verse to abrogate the verse of the *mut‘atu ’l-ḥajj,* nor did (the Messenger of Allāh) forbid it till he died. (And then) one man said by his own opinion what he wished.’’ [*ibid.*]

The author says: This tradition has been narrated (in another place) with different words but the same meaning.

There is a tradition from Muṭrif that he said: ‘‘ ‘Imrān ibn Ḥaṣīn sent for me in his illness in which he died, and said: ‘I was narrating to you some traditions so that Allāh may benefit you by them. Now, if I remain alive, keep them as my secret, and if I die, then narrate them on my authority, because then I will be safe. And know that the Prophet of Allāh combined the *ḥajj* and the *‘umrah ;* then nothing was sent down on this subject in the Book of Allāh, nor was it forbidden by the Prophet of Allāh. (But) one man said about it by his own opinion what he wished.’ ’’ [Muslim; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *as-Sunan,* an-Nasā’ī]

It is reported that ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar was asked about *mut‘atu ’l-ḥajj.* He said: ‘‘It is *ḥalāl* (lawful).’’ The questioner told him: ‘‘Surely, your father forbade it!’’ He said: ‘‘If my father forbade it and the Messenger of Allāh performed it then what do you think I should do? Should I follow the order of my father or the order of the Messenger of Allāh?’’ The man said: ‘‘Rather, the order of the Messenger of Allāh.’’ He said: ‘‘Surely the Messenger of Allāh performed it.’’ [at-Tirmidhī, *Zādu ’l-ma‘ād*]

And there is from Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdullāh that he heard Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ and Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Qays, (in the year when Mu‘āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān performed his *ḥajj*) talking about enjoyment by *‘umrah* for *ḥajj.* Ḍaḥḥāk said: ‘‘Nobody shall do it except he who is ignorant of the command of Allāh.’’ Sa‘d replied: ‘‘What evil did you utter, O my nephew!’’ Ḍaḥḥāk said: ‘‘But surely ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb forbade it.’’ Sa‘d said: ‘‘Surely, the Messenger of Allāh did it and we did it in his company.’’ [at-Tirmidhī, *as-Sunan,* an-Nasā’ī; *as-Sunan al-kubrā*; *al-Muwaṭṭa’* and *al-Umm*]

al-Bukhārī, Muslim and al-Nasā’ī have narrated from Abū Mūsā that

he said: ' ' I came to the Messenger of Allāh while he was in al-Baṭḥā'. He said: 'Did you raise your voice in *talbiyah* (Did you put on *iḥrām*)?' I said: 'I raised my voice as the Prophet did.' He asked me: 'Have you brought any sacrificial animal?' I said: 'No,' The Prophet said: 'Go around the House and (march) between Ṣafā and Marwah, then end your *iḥrām.'* So I went around the House and (marched) between Ṣafā and Marwah. Then (after ending the *iḥrām*) I went to a woman from my people, she combed my head and I washed my head. Thereafter, I used to give religious decisions during the rule of Abū Bakr and 'Umar. Once I was standing in the season (of *ḥajj*) when a man came to me and said: 'You do not know what the leader of the faithful ('Umar) has invented concerning the rites (of *ḥajj*).' So I said: 'O people! Whoever we might have given him our decision, let him wait, because this leader of the faithful is coming to you concerning it.' When he ('Umar) arrived, I asked him: 'What have you invented concerning the rites?' He said: 'If we take the Book of Allāh, then Allāh says: *And complet the ḥajj and 'umrah for Allāh,* and if we take the tradition of our Prophet, then he did not end his *iḥrām* until he slaughtered the offering.' '' [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

Muslim has narrated from Abū Naḍrah that he said: ''Ibn 'Abbās used to order *mut'ah* and Ibn az-Zubayr used to forbid it. This was reported to Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh; so he said: 'On my hand the talk progressed. We did *mut'ah* in the company of the Messenger of Allāh; then when 'Umar stood up (became caliph) he said: ''Surely, Allāh used to make lawful for the Messenger of Allāh whatever He wished from whatever He wished. And surely the Qur'ān came down gradually. Therefore, complete the *ḥajj* and *'umrah* as Allāh has ordered you, and separate your *ḥajj* from your *'umrah,* as it is more completing for your *ḥajj* and more completing for your *'umrah''.' ''* [*ibid.*]

And there is from Abū Mūsā that 'Umar said: ''It (i.e. *mut'ah*) is the *sunnah* (custom) of the Messenger of Allāh. But I am afraid that they will sleep with them (i.e. the women) under the trees and then proceed with them as pilgrims.'' [Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal]

There is a tradition from Sa'īd ibn Musayyab (that he said)that 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb forbade Mut'ah in the months of *ḥajj* and said: ' ' I performed it in the company of the Messenger of Allāh and I forbid it. And it is because one of you comes from a far away place

dishevelled, worn out, having the intention of *‘umrah* in the months of *ḥajj.* And his dishevelment, and tiredness and *talbiyah* are only for his *‘umrah.* Then he arrives and goes around the House, and ends his *iḥrām* and wears (sewn clothes) and uses perfume and sleeps with his wife if she is with him. Thereafter, when the day of *tarwiyah* comes he raises his voice in *talbiyah* of *ḥajj* and proceeds to Minā, saying *talbiyah* of *ḥajj* in which there is neither dishevelment, nor tiredness nor *talbiyah* except for one day only. And the *ḥajj* is better than *‘umrah.* If we leave them on this system, they shall embrace them (i.e. the women) under the trees. Moreover, the people of the House (i.e. Meccans) have neither any cattle nor any crop, and their spring is only those who stay with them.'' [*Jam‘u 'l jawāmi‘*]

There is from Muslim from Abū Naḍrah from Jābir. (Abū Naḍrah) said: ‘‘I said: ‘Verily, Ibn az-Zubayr forbids *mut‘ah* and Ibn ‘Abbās orders it.’ He (Jābir) said: ‘On my hand the talk progressed. We did *mut‘ah* in the company of the Messenger of Allāh and in the company of Abū Bakr. When ‘Umar became ruler, he delivered a lecture before the people and said: ‘‘Verily, the Messenger of Allāh is this Messenger, and the Qur’ān is this Qur’ān. And, surely, there were two *mut‘ah's* in the days of the Messenger of Allāh, and I forbid them and shall inflict punishment for them; one of them is the *mut‘ah* of women; and I will not get hold of a man who marries a woman for a period, but that I shall eliminate him with stones; and the second is the *mut‘ah* of *ḥajj.*'' ’ '' [*as-Sunan al-kubrā*]

There is a tradition from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said that he heard ‘Umar saying: ‘‘By Allāh, verily I forbid you the *mut‘ah,* and surely it is in the Book of Allāh and surely the Messenger of Allāh performed it.'' He meant *‘umrah* in the *ḥajj.* [*as-Sunan,* an-Nasā’ī]

Muslim has narrated from ‘Abdullāh ibn Shaqīq that he said: ‘‘ ‘Uthmān used to forbid the *mut‘ah* and ‘Alī used to order it. So, ‘Uthmān said something to ‘Alī and ‘Alī said: ‘Surely, you know that we performed *mut‘ah* in the company of the Messenger of Allāh.’ ‘Uthmān said: ‘But we were afraid’.'' [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

Ibn Abī Shaybah and Muslim have narrated from Abū Dharr: *‘‘Mut‘ah* in the *ḥajj* was (prescribed) especially for the companions of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.).'' [*ibid*]

Muslim has narrated from Abū Dharr that: ‘‘The two *mut‘ah's* are

not suitable but for us especially.'' He meant the *mut'ah* of women and *mut'ah* of *ḥajj.* [*ibid.*]

The author says: The traditions of this meaning are very numerous, but we have quoted only what was relevant to the scope of our discussion, and that is to discuss the prohibition of *mut'atu 'l-ḥajj* from the point of view of the *Tafsīr.* Sometimes, the argument about it is to see whether the man who prohibited it was right or not, or whether had any excuse for it or not. But such a discussion comes under *'ilmu 'l-kalām* (Theology); it is outside the limits of our book. And sometimes, the arguments are to see what reasoning has been advanced in the traditions concerning this subject, with special reference to the Qur'ān and the *sunnah.* Such a discussion is based on the meaning of the Qur'ān and the traditions. And it is relevant to the subject of this book of ours.

Therefore, we shall look, one by one, into the arguments put in these traditions:-

First Argument: It is claimed that the words of Allāh, *And complete the ḥajj and 'umrah for Allāh* show that *ḥajju 't-tamattu'* is not lawful, and that *ḥajju 't-tamattu'* was especially allowed for the Messenger of Allāh. This argument has been put in the tradition of Abū Naḍrah from Jābir that 'Umar said: ''Surely, Allāh used to make lawful for the Messenger of Allāh whatever He wished from wahtever He wished. And surely the Qur'ān came down gradually. Therefore, complete the *ḥajj* and *'umrah* as Allāh has ordered you.''

Reply: You very well know that the words of Allāh, *And complete the ḥajj and 'umrah for Allāh* ... do not say anything except that it is obligatory to complete the *ḥajj* and *'umrah* after one determines to perform them. For a further proof, see the next sentence, *but if you are prevented,* i.e. from completing them.

Complete the ḥajj and 'umrah cannot, by any stretch of imagination, mean that *'umrah* and *ḥajj* should not be combined. Likewise, there is not even an iota of proof that combining the *'umrah* and the *ḥajj* was an order given specially to the Prophet only, or to him and his companions on the last pilgrimage only.

By saying that it was an order especially for the Prophet and/ or his companions, one has to accept that it was a system/established by the Messenger of Allāh. See the tradition of an-Nasā'ī from Ibn 'Abbās that

he heard ‘Umar saying: ‘‘By Allāh, verily I forbid you the *mut‘ah,* and surely it is in the Book of Allāh and surely the Messenger of Allāh performed it.’’

Second Argument: *Mut‘ātu ’l-ḥajj* was forbidden on the basis of the Book of Allāh and the tradition of the Prophet.

This argument is seen in the tradition of Abū Mūsā, where ‘Umar told him : ‘‘If we take the Book of Allāh, then Allāh says, *And complete the ḥajj* and *‘umrah for Allāh,* and if we take the tradition of our Prophet then (we find that) he did not end the *ihrām* until he slaughtered the offering.’’
Replies: So far as the Book of Allāh is concerned, it has just been shown that it goes against his claim.

His reference to the tradition of the Prophet is equally weak:

First, he contradicts himself in this claim. He has already said in other traditions (some of which have been quoted earlier) that ‘‘surely the Messenger of Allāh performed it.’’

Second: The traditions loudly say that the Messenger of Allāh performed it; and that once he raised his voice in *talbiyah* of *‘umrah* and later on raised his voice in *talbiyah* of *ḥajj;* and that he admonished the people, saying, ‘‘Do you (want to) teach me about Allāh?’’

The claim of Ibn Taymiyyah at this juncture that the Messenger of Allāh had performed *ḥajju ’l-qirān* that year is a very astonishing thing. Even more amusing is his claim that *ḥajju ’l-qirān* was called *mut‘atu ’l-ḥajj*!!

Third: What the traditions say is that the Prophet did not shave his head after performing the *‘umrah,* because his sacrificial animals had not yet reached their destination. But it does not mean that he had not ended his *iḥrām* of *‘umrah* or that he went to *ḥajj* with the same *iḥrām.* The verse clearly says that the pilgrim who leads his offerings with him, is not to shave his head until the offering reaches its destination. Also, it clearly says that the one whose family dwells not near the Sacred Mosque shall do *mut‘atu ’l-ḥajj.* If a non-resident pilgrim brings his offering with him, he is obliged to perform *mut‘atu ’l-ḥajj* (because he is non-resident) and at the same time, not to shave his head (because the offering is yet to reach its destination.) Merely not shaving the head does not mean that one has not ended one’s *iḥrām* of *‘umrah.*

Fourth: Let us accept, for the sake of argument, that the Messenger

of Allāh himself did not perform *mut'atu 'l-ḥajj.* But it is universally accepted that he ordered all his companions and family members to perform their *ḥajj* according to the newly established system of *mut'atu 'l-ḥajj.* Now which of the two could be called the system promulgated by the Prophet for his *ummah*? The one which was especially meant for his own self? Or the other which he ordered his *ummah* to follow and which was also supported by the Qur'ān?

Third Argument: It was claimed, that *mutatu'l '-ḥajj* creates a situation which is not suitable for the pilgrims. After *'umrah* and before *ḥajj,* he is allowed to wear beautiful clothes, use perfume and sleep with the women. And it is against the dignity of *ḥajj.* This claim is found in the traditions of Abū Mūsā in which 'Umar is reported as saying: ''But I am afraid that they will sleep with them (women) under the trees and then proceed with them as pilgrims.'' And as he said, according to another tradition: ''Surely I know that the Prophet and his companions did it. But I did not like them sleeping with them (i.e. with their women) under the trees and then proceeding to *ḥajj* with the water dropping from their heads'' (because of the obligatory bath).

Replies: It is preferring one's own opinion against a clear order of Allāh. Allāh and His Messenger had clearly promulgated the system of *mut'atu 'l-ḥajj;* and Allāh and His Messenger knew very well that this system would lead to this supposedly undesireable effect. Still they thought it good for the Muslims. Then why should 'Umar be afraid of this effect?

It is interesting to note that the relevant verse of the Qur'ān gives the same reason for the promulgation of this system which he is using to show his displeasure and dislike. Allāh says: *then whoever enjoys by the 'umrah for ḥajj.* What is the meaning of enjoyment if not 'taking one's fill of the pleasure', 'sleeping one self with sexual activities, fine clothes, etc.' So, Allāh mentions it approvingly and 'Umar disliked it and was displeased with it!!

We are even more astonished when we see that the companions had offered the same criticism against Allāh and His Prophet (when the verse was revealed and the Prophet ordered them to adopt the system of *mut'atu 'l-ḥajj*) which 'Umar used as the basis of his prohibition. See the tradition reported in *ad-Durru 'l-manthūr* through al-Hākim from Jābir in which he

says: ‘‘We said: ‘Well, shall one go to ‘Arafāt with one’s penis dripping semen?’ This talk reached the Messenger of Allāh, so he stood up to deliver a lecture’’ and replied to their objection and again ordered to perform *mut‘atu ’l-ḥajj* as he had ordered them the first time. Was that reply not enough to bury such displeasure for ever?

Fourth Argument: It is said that this system badly affects the market of Mecca. We see this argument in the tradition of al-Suyūṭī from Sa‘īd ibn Musayyab, in which ‘Umar says: ‘‘The people of the House have neither any cattle nor any crop, and their spring is only those who stay with them.’’

Replies: This also is preferring one’s own opinion against a clear order of Allāh.

Moreover, Allāh has refuted such claims in a similar situation where He says: *O you who believe! Verily, the idolators are unclean, so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this very year; and if you fear poverty, then soon Allāh will enrich you through His grace, if He please; Surely Allāh is All-knowing, All-wise*. (9:28)

Fifth Argument: It is claimed that *mut‘atu ’l-ḥajj* is allowed when one is afraid, and when there is no fear there should be no *mut‘atu ’l-ḥajj.* It is seen in the tradition of Muslim from ‘Abdullāh ibn Shaqīq that ‘Uthmān said to ‘Alī: ‘‘But we were afraid.’’ Also it is written in *ad-Durru ’l-manthūr* that Ibn Abī Shaybah, Ibn Jarīr and Ibn al-Mundhir have reported from Ibn az-Zubayr that he said in a lecture: ‘ ‘ O people! By Allāh, enjoying by *‘umrah* for *ḥajj* is not as you do. It is for the men who raises his voice in *talbiyah* of *ḥajj,* then he is prevented by an enemy or illness or fracture or any other reasons till the days of *ḥajj* are gone, then he reaches (Mecca); so he shall change it to *‘umrah,* and go on enjoying until the next year; then he shall perform *ḥajj* and offer sacrifice. This is the meaning of enjoyment by *‘umrah* to *ḥajj.’’*

Replies: The verse is general and unconditional; it covers those who are afraid as well as those who are not afraid. It has been explained earlier that the sentence which promulgates *mut‘atu ’l-ḥajj* is the verse: *this is for him whose family dwells not near the Sacred Mosque.* And it is

without any condition.

Moreover, the traditions clearly. say that the Prophet performed his last pilgrimage as *ḥajju ’t-tamattu‘* and he did the intention (*niyyah ,*النّيّة) of *iḥrām* twice — first for *‘umrah* and later for *ḥajj.* And nobody can say that at that time there was any risk or danger for the Muslims.

Sixth Argument: It is claimed in the two traditions of Abū Dharr, reported in *ad Durru ’l-manthūr,* that *mut‘atu ’l-ḥajj* was a system meant especially for the companions of the Prophet.

Replies: If it means what ‘Uthmān and Ibn az-Zubayr claimed that they were at that time in danger and, therefore, it was allowed to them, then the reply given to the fifth argument applies here also.

But if it means that it was a special rule made for them only, then it is refuted by the words of Allāh: *this is for him whose family dwells not near the Sacred Mosque.* It does not say, ‘‘this is for the companions of Muḥammad only’’.

Moreover, if it was meant especially for the companions of the Prophet, then why did some of the companions, like ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, Ibn az-Zubayr, Abū Mūsā, Mu‘āwiyah, and, according to a report, Abū Bakr reject it?

Seventh Argument: Some people say that ‘Umar prohibited it by his own authority as he was Master of the Affairs (*khalīfah*) (*waliyu ’l-amr,* ولىّ الامر) and Allāh has made it obligatory on the Muslims to obey the Masters of the Affairs, as He says: *Obey Allāh, and obey the Apostle and the Masters of the affair from among you.* (4:59)

Replies: The authority vested in the Masters of the Affairs does not cover this case. There are very many verses in the Qur’ān which show that.

It is compulsory to obey and follow what Allāh has revealed to His Prophet: *Follow what has been sent down to you from your Lord ...* (7:3)

Whatever was ordained and promulgated by the Prophet was according to the command of Allāh, as may be understood from the verses: *....nor do they prohibit what Allāh and His Apostle have*

prohibited ... (9:29), ... *and whatever the Apostle gives you, accept it, and from whatever he forbids you keep back ...* (59:7). The meaning of *gives you* is 'orders you', because it is used here as the opposite of ''forbids you''. It is obligatory to obey Allāh and His Apostle by doing what he orders and keeping back from what he forbids.

Likewise, the judgement and decision must be according to the revelation sent down by Allāh: *and whoso judges not by what Allāh has sent down, these then are the unjust*. (5:45) *and whoso judges not by what Allāh has sent down, these then are the transgressors*. (5:47); *and whoso judges not by what Allāh has sent down these then are infidels.* (5:44). *Again Allāh says: And it is not for a believer man or woman to have any choice in their affair when Allāh and His Apostle have decided a matter; and whoever disobeys Allāh and His Apostle, indeed he has strayed off a manifest straying* (33:36*); And thy Lord creates whatever He pleases, and chooses too; it is not theirs to choose ...* (28:68). Choosing means judging and legislating, or else it is general in meaning which includes judging and legislating too.

The Qur'ān has openly declared that it is a Book not to be abrogated and that its laws will remain as they are upto the Day of Resurrection. *And surely it is Mighty Book. Falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it; a revelation from the All-wise, the Most Praised One*. (41:41-42). The verse is general and the ''falsehood'' includes abrogation also, which is rejected by this verse.

In short, whatever has been ordained by Allāh and His Prophet, or whatever has been decided by Allāh and His Prophet must be obeyed and followed by the whole *ummah,* the rulers as well as the ruled.

It is obvious from above that the word of Allāh, *Obey Allāh and obey the Apostle and the Masters of the Affair from among you,* gives ''the Master of Affairs'' authority in other than the *sharī'ah.* Because protecting and following the *sharī'ah* is obligatory on the rulers as well as the others; nay! it is more binding on the rulers. The authority of the Masters of Affair (*ulu 'l-amr,* اولو الامر) is confined to giving orders which they think to be in the interest of the *ummah* provided that the command of Allāh concerning that matter is protected and followed. It is only then that the *ummah is* expected to obey them.

A man has an option to eat on a certain day and abstain from food

next day, while he accepts that it is lawful to him to eat from his own money. He is free to sell or buy at any time, or not to do so, if he so wishes, while the basic matter — trade — is lawful. If someone quarrels with him about his property, he may appeal to the judge to protect his right; on the other hand, he may refrain from doing so; but the basic *sharī'ah* will remain in force that it is his right to bring the matter before the judge. It all depends on his own choice on what he thinks to be in his best interest. But the basic rules remain intact, that it is lawful for him to eat, sell and buy, or to put his case before the judge.

But he has no right to drink liquor, or take interest or usurp other's property, even if he thought that it was in his best interest. Why? Because it directly conflicts with the laws ordained by Allāh.

The above were the examples of personal affairs. In the same way the ruler has the authority to manage the affairs of the state according to the best interest of the *ummah,* but always protecting and preserving the laws of Allāh as He has ordained. For example, he may decide to defend a frontier of the Islamic state at a certain time, or to retreat from it if it is more advantageous. He may announce a public holiday on a certain day and things like that, as he, in his best judgement, thinks beneficial for the *ummah.* But he cannot change the *sharī'ah.*

In short, as an individual has a right to take a decision in his personal or family affairs, keeping within the limits imposed by the relevant laws, so also, a ruler appointed by the authority of the Messenger of Allāh has the authority to take a decision in the affairs of the state and the *ummah,* keeping within the relevant laws ordained by Allāh.

Had a ruler been given authority to manipulate the laws of the divine *sharī'ah,* if he thought that the manipulation was in the interest of *ummah,* no rule and no law could remain intact; the talk that the *sharī'ah* of Islam was to continue upto the Day of Resurrection would become meaningless.

What is the difference between the three statements appended below?

''The law of enjoying the good things of life is not suitable for the pilgrim who was expected to spend his time in devotion and worship. Therefore, this law must be abolished.''

''The laws legalizing slavery are not suitable for the modern world

which stands for general freedom. Therefore, these laws must be abolished.''

''The penal code of Islam cannot be tolerated by the advanced human society of modern times, nor is that code in conformity with current codes. Therefore, this code must be abolished.''

Why should the first statement be accepted and the others rejected?

Some traditions on this subject show that this basic principle was raised during that controversy. Isḥāq ibn Rā'wiyah (in his *al-Musnad*) and Aḥmad have narrated from Hasan: ''Verily, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb wanted to prohibit *mut'atu 'l-ḥajj*. Ubay ibn Ka'b stood up and said: 'You have no right to do so. Surely, the Book of Allāh came with it (i.e., it was promulgated by the Qur'ān) and we did *'umrah* (of *tamattu'*) with the Messenger of Allāh.' There upon, 'Umar came down.'' [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهِدُ اللهَ عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ
وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ ـ٢٠٤. وَإِذَا تَوَلَّىٰ سَعَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ
وَالنَّسْلَ وَاللهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَسَادَ ـ٢٠٥ . وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللهَ أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ بِالْإِثْمِ
فَحَسْبُهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَلَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ـ ٢٠٦ . وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ
مَرْضَاتِ اللهِ وَاللهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ـ ٢٠٧ .

And among men is he whose talk in the life of this world pleases you, and takes Allāh to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is the most violent of adversaries (204). *And when he becomes ruler, he strives on earth that he may cause mischief therein and destroy the crop and the progeny; and Allāh does not love mischief* (205). *And when it is said to him, fear Allāh, he is overcome by honour* (pride) *by sin; so enough for him is Hell*; *and certainly it is an evil abode* (206). *and Among men is he who sells his self* (soul) *to seek the pleasure of Allāh*; *and Allāh is Affectionate to the servants* (207).

COMMENTARY

This is another classification of men according to their character. As the preceding verses (200—202) classified them according to their want of this world or the Hereafter, these verses do so from the point of view of their hypocrisy or the sincerity of their faith. And this is the link between these and the preceding verses.

Qur'ān: *And among men ... most violent of adversaries*: *a'jabahu* (اعجبه) means gave him pleasure, delighted him. The words, *in the life of this world* are connected with *pleases you.* The meaning is: his talk pleases you in this life, because in this life one has to rely on appearances. The deeper traits and inner feelings are hidden behind a curtain which cannot be lifted at all, although sometimes some clues are found which help one to surmise what lies behind the curtain.

Then come the word: *and takes Allāh to witness as to what is in his*

heart. He talks in a way that pleases you: he seems eager to protect the way of the truth, appears keen to do good for the people, looks enthusiastic for the advancement of the cause of the religion and the *ummah.* And to show that his voice comes from the depth of his heart, he calls on Allāh to be his witness. But, in reality he is the most virulent enemy of the truth.

Aladd (الدّ) is the adjective in superlative degree, derived from *ladda ludūdan* (he became a very violent adversary, لدّ لدودا .) *khiṣām* (الخصام.) is plural of *khaṣm* (الخصم) by the paradigm of *ṣa'b:ṣi'āb* (صعب : صعاب) and *ka'b:ki'āb* (كعب : كعاب). Also it is said that it is an infinitive verb, and that *aladdu 'l-khiṣām* (الدّ الخصام) means "most violent in enmity".

Qur'ān: *And when he become ruler he strives on earth that he may cause mischief therein : tawallī* (التّولّى) means to get authority and power. Further support of this meaning comes from the next verse: *he is overcome by honour* (pride) *by sin.* It shows that he has got an honour (i.e., a cause of pride) earned with sin. (The sin is committed by his heart that does not conform with his tongue.)

Sa'y (السّعى) means to strive, to walk hurriedly. Thus the verse means: When this hypocrite, this most violent of adversaries, gets a chance to do something, and is given authority and rules over the people, he hastens hither and thither and strives to create mischief in the land.

Tawallī (التّولّى) may also mean to turn back, to be out of sight. In that case the verse would mean: "And when he turns back (from you), his actions in your absence belie his talk in your presence." The enthusiasm for the common welfare and the good of the *ummah* turns into striving in the land to create mischief and evil.

Qur'ān: *and destroy the crop and the progeny*: Apparently it is a description of the mischief. He creates mischief by destroying the crop and the progeny. The continued existence of the human species depends on food and procreation. These are the two most essential things which the human species cannot do without. Procreation is clear from the word 'progeny'. So far as food is concerned, man acquires it from the animal and the plant; animals again acquire it from plants. Thus, the basis of food is the plant which is obtained from crops. That is why the mischief and destruction has been explained in terms of crops and progeny. The verse means that he creates mischief and destruction in the earth by eliminating through the destruction of crop and progeny.

Qur'ān: *and Allāh does not love mischief*: *fasād* (الفساد) literally

means deterioration, corruption, decay, negation, immorality; here it has been translated as mischief.

Fasād (الفساد) in this sentence does not refer to the physical decay or destruction in this world. This universe is based on such a system that every destruction leads to a subsequent construction. A struggle for survival is continuously going on; every existence is followed by extinction, every life by death. Both are found in this natural cosmos side by side. This is the system created by Allāh; and how can He hate a thing which He Himself has created and decreed?

It follows that the ‘‘mischief’’ here refers to corruption in the *sharī‘ah* and legislation. Allāh ordained the laws of religion for the betterment of the actions of His servants; these laws will improve their character and traits; they will keep human society and human beings on the straight path, on the path of moderation. Thereupon, they will find happiness and prosperity in this life as well as in the lfie Hereafter. (This will be further explained under the verse 2:213)

Then this man appears on the scene whose words belie his inner feelings; he starts running hither and thither to create immorality and mischief on the earth. He pretends to improve society, but in reality he destroys. He alters the words of Allāh by giving them a wrong meaning; he changes the laws ordained by Allāh; he manipulates the teachings of the religion. All this leads to depravity of character and perennial controversy in religion and society. And, in this manner, the religion is negated, humanity is eliminated and the whole world is ruined.

To appreciate how true these verses are, look at the history of Islam and see how unauthorised people took the reins of the state in their hands, how they imposed themselves on the Muslim *ummah* and how they corruptly conducted the affairs of religion and state. They did what they did and the losers were the religion (which got nothing but evil results), the Muslims (who are always in decline and decadence) and the *ummah* (which is perennially plagued with internal strife and dispute.) The religion is now a ball in the hands of anyone who wants to play with; and human values a toy to be treasured and then discarded at the whim of the child.

The result of this striving of that hypocrite is decay and deterioration on the earth; first, he corrupted religion and then

destroyed humanity. That is why in some traditions *and destroy the crops and progeny* has been interpreted as the destruction of religion and humanity.

Qur'ān: *And when it is said to him, fear Allāh, he is overcome by honour* (pride) *by sin; so enough for is Hell, and certainly it is an ill abode.*

'Izzah (العزّة) means honour, *mihād* (المهاد) is the paved way, abode. Apparently, the words *by sin* qualify the word, *the honour,* and have no connection with *he is overcome.* The verse says that when he is told to fear Allāh, he is overcome by the apparent honour which he has earned through his sins and hypocrisy.

The real honour comes from Allāh as He says: *and Thou exaltest whom Thou pleasest and abasest whom Thou pleasest* (3:26); *and to Allāh belongs the honour and to His Apostle and to the believer* (63:8); *Do they seek honour from them? Then, surely all honour belongs to Allāh* (4:139). Honour is a status which Allāh attributes to Himself and declares that it is only He who bestows it on His chosen creatures. Such a thing cannot be a source of sin or evil. It naturally follows that the honour mentioned in this verse is not real honour which is given by Allāh. It is only a masquerade which deceives none except the ignorant people who mistakenly accept it as honour.

The preposition ''by'' (*b ...,* ب) in ''by sin'' (*bi 'l-ithm ,* بالاثم) has no connection with the verb *he is overcome;* the word ''sin'' is neither the object of ''is overcome'', nor its cause. In other words, the verse does not say that his honour or pride drives him to sin and to rejection of the advice to fear Allāh, or incites him to answer back the said advisor in unbecoming language. Nor does it mean that sin drives him to pride. As mentioned above, the word *by sin* qualifies the word *honour* (or pride), and indicates the honour or pride gained by sin. Had the word *honour* been left unconditional, it would have meant that Allāh recognised it as real honour (which comes from Allāh). And in that case it could not be said to create, or be created by, sin or pride. That is why we say that it is conditional and means an apparent honour which is earned through sin and hypocrisy.

There is another verse where the word honour (*'izzah,* العزّة) has been used for the unbelievers. But there, also, the context shows that it

means only an appearance of honour, not real honour. Allāh says: *Nay, those who disbelieve are* (steeped) *in self-exaltation* (*'izzatin,* عزّة) *and opposition. How many did We destroy of the generations before them, then they cried but there was no longer any escape* (38:2—3). Here the word *'izzatin* (عزّة) (translated above as ''self-exaltation'') is a common noun, it does not have any definite article before it, and the next verse describes the destruction of people like them. These points clearly show that here also it is only an appearance of honour, a passing shadow which will not last long.

Qur'ān: *And among the man is he who sells his self* (soul) *to seek the pleasure of Allāh; and Allāh is Affectionate to the servants.:* This verse is in contrast to the preceding three ones. On one side there is a man priding himself in his sins, boasting and self-exalting, showing the doing of good to people, hiding his hypocrisy behind a mask of charming words; and religion and humanity cannot expect of him anything except ruin and destruction.

On the other side is a man who has sold his soul to Allāh, he wants nothing except what Allāh wishes; he desires nothing for his self; his honour and strength come only from Allāh, and he seeks nothing but the pleasure of Allāh. By his presence, religious and worldly affairs re-acquire their correct shape, the truth is revived, humanity enjoys a happy life and the good effects of Islam reach every one.

This also shows the connection of the end of the verse, *and Allāh is Affectionate to the servants,* with its beginning. Surely, the presence of such a man is a great mercy from Allāh to His servants. Had there not been such virtuous people to counteract the designs of those others (whose stock-in-trade is hypocrisy and mischief), the structure of religion would have fallen into ruins, and the foundation of righteousness and goodness would have been destroyed. But it is the method chosen by Allāh that He removes that wrong by this truth, and repairs the damage inflicted by His enemies with the good spread by His beloved and chosen servants. He has said: *And were it not for Allāh's repelling some men with others, the earth certainly would be in a state of disorder* (2:251); *And had there not been Allāh's repelling some people by others, certainly would have been pulled down cloisters, and churches, and synagogues, and mosques in which Allāh's name is much remembered* (22:40); *therefore if*

these disbelievers in it, We have already entrusted it with a people who are not disbelievers in it (6:89). The decadance brought upon the religion and the world by those who love nothing but their own selves cannot be removed except through the good overflowing from those who have sold their souls to Allāh, who love nothing except Allāh and who desire nothing except that the world and the people of the world may become virtuous.

This deal has been praised by Allāh in many verses, one of which is as follows:-

Surely Allāh has bought from the believers their selves and their properties, for this that their's be the Garden; they fight in Allāh's way, so they slay and are slain; (this is) *a promise which is binding on Him in the Torah and the Injīl and the Qur'ān*; *and who is more faithful to his covenant than Allāh? Therefore, rejoice in the trade that you have transacted; and that is the great achievement* (9:111).

TRADITIONS

It is reported from as-Suddī about the verses, *And among the men is he whose talk ... an evil abode,* that they were revealed about Akhnas ibn Sharīq ath-Thaqafī, an ally of Banū Zuhrah. He came to the Prophet in Medina and said: ''I have come seeking Islam, and Allāh knows that surely I am truthful.'' The Prophet was pleased with that talk. The words of Allāh, *and takes Allāh to witness as to what is in his heart* refer to this aspect. Then he went out and passed by an agricultural field and some donkeys belonging to some Muslims. He burnt the filth and wounded and killed the donkeys. It was about that that the verse was revealed, *and when he turns away* (from you) *he runs hither and thither on earth so that he may cause mischief therein and destroy the tillage and the stock.* [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

It is narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that the three verses were revealed about the hypocrites because he shows what is opposed to what he hides in his heart. The author of *al-Majma'* (said that the same was also narrated from aṣ-Ṣādiq (as.). [*Majma'u 'l-bayān*]

The author says: But this interpretation does not fit the apparent meaning of the verse.

It is written in some traditions narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-*

bayt that these verses were revealed about their enemies.

It is narrated from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the words of Allāh, *and destroy the crop and progeny,* that crop means religion, and progeny, humanity. [*Majma'u 'l-bayān*]

The author says: This tradition has already been explained earlier. In another tradition *the crop* has been interpreted as 'progeny and crop'. It is easy to see how this also may fit the earlier explanation.

ash-Shaykh has narrated in his *al-Amālī* a tradition from 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (a.s.), about the verse: *And among men is he who sells ... Affectionate to the servants,* that he said: ''It was revealed about 'Alī (a.s.) when he slept (on the night of *hijrah*) on the bed of the Messenger of Allāh.''

The author says: There are innumerable traditions from both Shī'ah and Sunnī chains that this verse was revealed about 'Alī concerning his sacrifice on the night of *hijrah. Tafsīr al-burhān* gives five of those chains from ath-Tha'labī and others.

Ibn Marduwayh has narrated from Ṣuhayb that he said: ''When I intended to emigrate from Mecca to the Prophet in Medina, the Qurayshites told me, 'O Ṣuhayb! You came to us and you had no wealth. Now you want to emigrate with all this wealth of yours. By God, this can't be.' So I said to them, 'What do you think? Would you leave me if I gave you all my wealth?' They said: 'Yes!' Thereupon I gave them my wealth and they left me. I came out till I reached Medina. This incident was reported to the Prophet and he said: 'Ṣuhayb profited twice.' '' [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

The author says: He has narrated it from some other chains also, some of which add: and then the verse was revealed: *And among men is he who sells his soul ...*

Some other traditions say that it was revealed about Ṣuhayb and Abū Dharr because they purchased themselves by giving away their properties. But the verse does not say, ''he who purchases ...'', it says, *he who sells.* And the interpretation of the verses does not agree with the meaning of ''purchase''.

There is a tradition from 'Alī (a.s.) that this verse refers to a man who is killed because of enjoining to do good and forbidding to do bad. [*Majma'u 'l-bayān*]

The author says: It is one example of the general meaning of the

verse. There is no difficulty in explaining the meaning of the verse in general terms, though it was sent down on a particular occasion for a particular person.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَافَّةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ
إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ـ ٢٠٨ ـ فَإِنْ زَلَلْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْكُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ فَاعْلَمُوا
أَنَّ اللهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ـ ٢٠٩ ـ هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللهُ فِي ظُلَلٍ مِنَ
الْغَمَامِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ وَإِلَى اللهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ـ ٢١٠ ـ

O you who believe! Enter you one and all into submission wholly and do not follow the footsteps of Satan; *surely he is to you an open enemy*. (208) *But if you slip after clear signs have come to you, then know that Allāh is Mighty, Wise.* (209) *Do they await aught but that Allāh should come to them in the canopies of bright cloud and the angels; and the matter is decreed away*; *and all matters are returned to Allāh*. (210)

COMMENTARY

These three verses, together with the four that follow them, guide us as how to preserve religious unity in human society: To enter into total submission, to limit oneself to the word spoken by Allāh and to that deed whose path is shown by Allāh. They declare that religious unity was never disintegrated, nor was the happiness of both worlds turned into misery with disaster visited upon the territory of a people, except when they left submission, manipulated the signs of Allāh by altering them and putting them into the wrong place. This had happened to the children of Israel and other people, and will surely happen to this *ummah* also. But in the end Allāh promises them His help, *Surely the help of Allāh is near.*

Qur'ān: *O you who believe! Enter you one and all into submission wholly*: *slim* (submission, السّلم), *islām* (الاسلام) and *taslīm* (التّسليم) all are the same. *Kāffatan* (كافة) is for emphasis and means 'all', 'wholly'. As the verse is addressed to the believers, and they are ordered to enter into submission ''wholly'' the command covers the whole group as well as every individual. It is obligatory on each and every believer, as it is on the whole of Muslim society not to contravene this command and to

submit all matters to Allāh and His Apostle. Hence the phrase *one and all* in the translation.

Again, as the hearers are already believers the submission called for means total submission to Allāh after believing in Him. Hence the word *wholly* in the translation. It follows that the believers must submit all their affairs to Allāh, they should not decide themselves what was good for them and what was not, they should not prepare or select any path for themselves without the guidance of Allāh and His Apostle. They must remember that no people were destroyed except that they followed their own views and desires, and talked without true knowledge; and no people forfeited the right of life and happiness except that they became disunited.

It is clear from the above that following the footsteps of Satan does not mean following him in all the falsehood which he invites to, because a believer cannot follow Satan in all satanic schemes. Rather, it means to follow him in the matters of religion. Satan furnishes some paths of untruth with the signposts of truth; in this way, he puts into religion what is not from religion. Thus, a believer is deceived into following that path without realizing his error.

One way of becoming aware of such an interpolation is to find out whether Allāh and His Apostle have ever mentioned it in their teachings of the religion.

The context and words of the verses also show what has been explained above. ‘‘Footsteps’’ are found in a trodden path. The believer is proceeding on that path; therefore, it must be the path of true religion. But Satan has put his marks thereon. So, the *footsteps of Satan* should refer to Satanic ways within the highway of true faith. The believer is obliged to enter into submission. Therefore, wherever he proceeds without wholly submitting himself to Allāh and His Apostle, it must be in the footsteps of Satan If he goes on to that path, he is following Satan’s footsteps.

This verse is similar to some others. For example: *O men! Eat of what is in the earth lawful and good, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan; surely he is to you an open enemy. He only enjoins you evil and indecency, and that you should say against Allāh what you do not know* (2:168—169); *O you who believe! Do not follow the footsteps of Satan; and whoever follows the footsteps of Satan, then surely he enjoins*

indecency and evil. (24:21); *Eat of what Allāh has given you and do not follow the footsteps of Satan, then surely he enjoins indecency and evil.* (24:21); *Eat of what Allāh has given you and do not follow the footsteps of Satan; surely he is your open enemy*. (6:142). The difference between the verse under discussion and those quoted above is that this verse addresses the group as a whole, as it contains the word *kāffatan* (all, wholly, كافة); but those other verses are general. Accordingly, this verse implies the same meaning as the verses, *And hold fast by the cord of Allāh all together and be not divided.* (3:103); *And surely this My path is straight one, so follow it; and do not follow the* (other) *ways, for they will scatter you from His path.* (6:153).

The verse implies that Islam guarantees that it contains all kind of laws and knowledge which are needed by the human beings for their welfare and good.

Qur'ān: *But i f you slip ... Mighty, Wise: zallah* (الزّلّة) means a slip, a falling. The verse says: If you did not enter one and all into submission, wholly and slipped - and the slip refers to following the footsteps of Satan — then know that Allāh is Mighty, Who is not prevailed upon in His orders, and Wise, Who decides in your affairs according to His Wisdom. Thus He shall decide about you according to His Wisdom and shall enforce it upon you and nobody will be able to hinder it.

Qur'ān: *Do they await aught but that Allāh should come to them in the canopies of bright cloud and the angels: ẓulal* (الظّلل) is plural of *ẓullah* (الظّلّة) which means ''anything used for shade'', like canopy, awring, tent.

Apparently, the word ''angels'' is in condjunction with the divine name ''Allāh''.

The preceding two verses were addressed to the believers (in the second person). This one dramatically changes it to third person and starts addressing the Apostle of Allāh; implying that those who slip up and follow the footsteps of Satan are not worthy of direct address from Allāh. It appears as though they are awaiting a decree by their following the footsteps of Satan and by their disunity and division. And that decree should be that Allāh and the angels come unto them in canopies of cloud, and the matter be decided while they are still unaware of it - or without having any pity on them and on their plight; and all matters are

returned to Allāh; there is no escape from His judgement and decree.

The context shows that *Do they await aught ...* is the description of the threat implied in the previous sentence, *then know that Allāh is Mighty, Wise.*

It is self-evident truth, which is also proved by the Qur'ān and the *sunnah,* that attributes of the body cannot be used for Allāh, nor can He be described with adjectives of transient things. No such word, phrase or sentence can be used for Him which implies transcience, need, deficiency or want. Allāh says: *Nothing whatsoever* (is there) *like the like of Him.* (42:11); *and Allāh is He Who is Self-sufficient* (35:15); *Allāh is the Creator of everything.* (39:62) There are numerous such verses; and all of them are confirmed and decisive ones to which the ambiguous verses should be referred. It is these confirmed verses which guide us towards the correct interpretation of the ambiguous ones. If any verse apparently attributes to Allāh an action or a characteristic of transient things, then it must be referred to the confirmed verses and interpreted in a way which is not below His dignity nor opposed to His beautiful names.

Now here is a verse which attributes the action of ''coming'' to Allāh. A few other verses also have used this word for Him. *And comes your Lord with the angels arrayed in ranks* (89:22); *then came upon them Allāh from whence they did not expect* (59:2); *so Allāh came upon their structure from the foundations* (16:26). In all such verses, it is necessary to interpret them with such meanings which are worthy of Divine sublimity. We may give them the meaning of, let us say, sending His chastisement upon them, surrounding them with His power or wrath. Accordingly, the meaning of *Allāh should come to them* in this verse shall be ''Allāh should surround them with His power for enforcing His decree on them''.

Further, whenever Allāh is pleased to show that the apparent means and the intermediate causes are not independent of the order of Allāh, He discards attributing the action to such causes and means; instead He attributes it to Himself or to His order. He says in one place: *Allāh takes the souls at the time of their death* (39:42); while in other places He attributes this action to the angel of death or the angels; *Say, the angel of death ... shall cause you to die* (32:11); *Until when death comes to one of you, Our messengers* (i.e. angels) *take him away* (6:61). To make it

more clear, look how He has declared about the angels that: *only according to His command do they act* (21:27).

Likewise, He says, *Surely your Lord will judge between them* (10:93), and *when the order of Allāh came, judgement was given with truth* (40:78).

And the same is the case with the verse under discussion (*Do they await aught but that Allāh should come to them in the canopies of bright cloud and the angels*) and the verse *Do they await aught but that the angels should come to them or that the order of your Lord should come* (16:33).

The above verse proves that the verse under discussion, *Allāh should come,* also means ''the order of Allāh should come''. Likewise, in every place where the action attributed to Allāh is below His power and dignity, we may safely say that the word 'order' or 'command' is implied, as the above verses have shown.

This explanation has been accepted by the majority of the commentators of the Qur'ān and it is correct. But there is even a deeper and finer meaning which can be understood if one ponders on the Qur'ān.

A characteristic which is accompanied by a deficiency, want or imperfection is not attributable to Allāh. But if that characteristic could be separated from that deficiency, want or imperfection, then there is no reason why it cannot be attributed to Allāh, provided it is suitable for His sublimity and perfection. The word ''coming'' creates in our mind a picture of a body gradually moving and shortening the distance between itself and another body till it reaches quite near to that. If we can remove the material characteristics from this meaning, there will remain the idea of ''nearness'', with the disappearance of any obstruction in between. In that case, it would be quite correct to use this word for Allāh literally, not metaphorically. Accordingly, *Allāh should come to them* would mean that there would remain no curtain between His creatures and His judgement about them.

Anyhow, this verse contains the threat which was implied in the preceding sentence, *then know that Allāh is Mighty, Wise.* This threat may be about the chastisement awaiting them in the Hereafter, as it is in the similar verse: *Do they await aught but that the angels should come to them or that the order of your Lord should come* (16:33), which, as its context shows, is clearly about the events of the Hereafter.

Or, it may be about something expected to happen in this world, as may be seen in the verses of *sūrah* Yūnus: *so when their apostle came, the matter was decided with justice, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. And they say, 'when this promise will come to pass, if you are truthful ...' Say, Do you see if His chastisement overtakes you by night or by day, what is there of it that the guilty hasten for?* (10:47-50). The same is the implication of the verses, 30:30-36, and the verse, *How many a town, which was unjust, We did destroy and We raised another people after it?* (21:11).

The chastisement of this world is because this world is a foretaste of the life Hereafter, where every aspect of this world would appear more perfectly and completely.

And it is possible that the promised punishment would be in both worlds together.

In any case, the words, *in the canopies of bright cloud* would be interpreted according to the place where the promised punishment would be meted out.

Qur'ān: *and the matter is decreed away; and all matters are returned to Allāh.*: The matter is decreed away by Allāh, but His name is not mentioned to show His Greatness. There are many examples of such deletion in the Qur'ān.

TRADITIONS

Many traditions have been written concerning verse 2:168 (*O men! Eat the lawful and good things out of what is in the earth; and do not follow the footsteps of Satan ...*) which support the meaning given by us of *following the footsteps of Satan.*

Some traditions say that ''submission'' means the love and obedience of the Prophet and his progeny (*wilāyah,* الولاية). Such traditions give an example of a general meaning.

There is a . tradition from ar-Riḍā (a.s.) about the words of Allāh, *Do they await aught but that Allāh should come to them in the canopies of bright cloud and the angels:* He said: ''Allāh says: 'Do they wait aught but that Allāh should come to them with the angels in the canopies of bright clouds'. Like this it was revealed.'' And he said, about the word of Allāh; *And comes your Lord with the angels arranged in ranks* (89:22),

that : ‘‘Surely, Allāh cannot be described with attributes of coming and going. Elevated is He from transferring from one place to another. Verily, it means, ‘And comes the command of your Lord with the angels arranged in ranks’.’’ [*at-Tawḥīd* and *Ma‘ānī al-akhbār*]

The author says: The words of the Imām at the beginning of the interpretation, ‘‘Allāh says’’, do not mean the actual word or recitation of the verse. The word ‘‘says’’ here stands for ‘‘means’’. The interpretation given in this tradition is the same which we have already explained, that ‘‘coming of Allāh’’ means coming of His command. The Angels do whatever they do, and come down whenever they come down, by the command of Allāh. He says about angels: *Nay! They are honoured servants; they do not precede Him in speech and* (only) *according to His commandment do they act*. (21:27), and *He sends down the angels with the spirit by His commandment* (16:2).

The verse begins with an interrogation which here stands for denial and disapproval. It means that ‘‘they do not await’’ or ‘‘they should not await’’. But some people have said that this denial and disapproval is comprehensive and refutes not only their awaiting but even the thing awaited. In other words, it means that they do not await aught but an impossible thing — that Allāh should come to them in the canopies of cloud as one body comes to another body, and that the angels should come with Him and He should order them and forbid them. Obviously such a thing is impossible; and the aim of the verse would be to hint that these people cannot mend their ways by these exhortations and sermons.

But this meaning does not agree with the context of the verse. It has been explained that all these verses have one context. Therefore, this verse also is about the condition of the believers. And the believers cannot be condemned in the suggested manner. Apart from that if Allāh had meant to show that the thing awaited was impossible or beneath His sublimity, He would have followed it with some words to show that it was so. And we find that it is the custom of the Qur’ān everywhere on such occasions. For example: *And those who do not hope of our meeting say:‘‘Why have not angels been sent down upon us, or* (why) *do we not see our Lord?’’ Certainly they think too high of themselves and have revolted* (in) *a great revolt*. (25:21); *And they say: ‘‘The Beneficent* (God) *has taken to Himself a son!’’ Glory be to Him!*

(21:26).

Apart from that, what would be, in this case, the significance of the words, *in the canopies of bright cloud?* And what would the subsequent words mean?

OTHER TRADITIONS

This last verse has variously been interpreted in the traditions of the Imāms of *Ahlu'l-bayt* as referring to the Day of Resurrection (al-'Ayyāshi from al-Bāqir — a.s.) or the Day of Return (the *raj'ah*[1], الرّجعة) (aṣ-Ṣadūq from aṣ-Sādiq — a.s.) or the Reappearance of Imām al-Mahdī (a.s.) (al-'Ayyāshī from al-Bāqir [a.s.] with two chains.)

And there are many such cases where a verse has been interpreted by them as referring to the Day of Resurrection in one tradition, and to the Day of Return in another, and to the Reappearance of Imām al-Mahdī (a.s.) in yet another one. It is because all these meanings are inter-related, so much so that they can be said to be basically one. As the people have not gone deep into the subject of the Resurrection and have not looked into it in the light of the Qur'ān they have gone their separate ways about these traditions. Some have discarded them altogether, even though there are probably more than five hundred traditions on its various aspects; some have interpreted them according to their own views even though the wordings of the traditions are very clear and explicit. A third group quotes these traditions and refrains from giving any opinion - these people are the most reasonable of all.

The non-Shī'ah Muslims believe that Imām al-Mahdī will appear; they have narrated *mutawātir* traditions about it from the Prophet, but they reject the idea of the *raj'ah* and say that this belief is a peculiarity of the Shī'ahs. And in these days some people, claiming to be Shī'ah, also have rejected this belief, saying that it has been foisted into Shī'ism by the Jews and some nominal Muslims like 'Abdullāh ibn Sabā' [2]and his

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[1] *ar Raj'ah* (return) means that after the re-appearance of Imām al-Mahdī (a:s.) and before the Day of Judgement some confirmed friends of Allāh and some of His confirmed enemies shall be returned to this world again to live under the rule of the Representative of Allāh.

[2] 'Abdullāh ibn Sabā' is a mythical personality, who did not exist

companions. One of them tried to refute this belief by intellectual argument, the gist of which is as follows:-

''It is a special grace of Allāh that a living person is not given death until he reaches the perfection of the life and all his potentialities are converted into achievements. If after death he is again sent back to this world it would be retrogression, a backward step from accomplishment to potentiality, and it is impossible, except when a truthful informer tells us about it, i.e., Allāh or any of His Representatives, as He has informed us concerning the events of Mūsā, 'Īsā, Ibrāhīm (peace be on them all) and others. But we have not been told by Him or them anything about *ar-raj'ah.* And the evidence put by the believers in *ar-raj'ah* is not complete.''

After saying this he went on to claim about each and every tradition that it was weak — without knowing the difference between the correct ones and the defective ones. The poor man did not realize that this argument is not a rational one at all. Its first part refutes its second part. If some thing is impossible by nature it would remain inpossible without any exception. An ''impossible'' idea would not be turned into ''possible'' just because a truthful informer said so. Anybody who said about an impossibility that it became a possibility, would not be ''truthful''. And if he was supposed to be really truthful then that thing would not have been an impossibility in the first place. Would we say that he was truthful if he were to say that one is not a half of two, or that a truthful person was at the same time a liar?

This much about the consistency of his argument. Now, we come to his argument that (1) All people die when they reach the perfection of the life, and when their potentialities are converted into achievements; (2) What has attained achievement cannot be turned back to potentiality; (3) Therefore, a dead man cannot be returned to this life.

In this argument, the second premise is correct; the first is not. It is not ''all'' people, but only ''some'', who die after attaining perfection and converting their potentialities into achievements. A man, who completes his natural span of life and dies from old age, may be said to

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outside the imagination of some story-tellers. See *'Abdullāh ibn Sabā' wa asāṭīr ukhrā* (عبد الله ابن سبا) by as-Sayyid Murtadā al-'Askarī of Tehran.

have reached the last stage of his perfection. But what about another man who prematurely dies of an epidemic or fatal sickness, or is killed? Can it be claimed that he had already reached the last stage of his potential perfection? The answer is ‘No’. Therefore, it cannot be said that it is impossible for such persons to be returned to the life of this world. Now it is obvious that his argument is neither comprehensive nor correct. We can think of many cases where it might be possible for a dead person (even if he had died after attaining his perfection) to be sent back to this world; for example, a man in his first life had a potential for a perfection which was not available at that time; he died; then by the progress of society, that perfectness became possible. What is there to prevent his return to this world to achieve that perfection for which he had a potential in the first life? Because it will not be a step back-ward - from perfection to potentiality; it will be progress from potential to perfection.

There are other examples, but this is not the place to go into the details of this subject.

As regards his argument against individual traditions, it has two serious defects: (1) These traditions are *mutawātir,* in their meaning, from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* — so much so that non-Shī‘ite Muslims have counted the belief of *ar-raj‘ah,* from the very early days of Islam, as one of the special beliefs of the Shī‘ah and their Imāms - and a *mutawātir* matter cannot be refuted even if the individual traditions be really defective, or weak, or arguable. (2). There are many verses revealed on this subject and many traditions which are complete in their meaning and reliable in their chains. We shall mention them when we come to the relevant verses like: *And on the day when We will gather from every people a party from among those who rejected Our signs, then they shall be formed into groups* (27:83). There are other verses to prove this belief.

Apart from these specific verses, there are others which imply this meaning. For example, the words of Allāh which come shortly after the verse under discussion: *Or do you think that you will enter the Garden while yet has not come upon the like of which came upon those who have passed before you* (2:214). And one of the things which came upon previous nations was that some of their dead were resurrected, and lived again in this world, as the Qur’ān narrates concerning the stories of Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, ‘Isā, ‘Uzayr, Armia and others. And the Messenger of Allāh has said: ‘‘By Him in Whose hand is my soul! Most certainly you

shall follow the traditions of those who were before you, as in a pair of shoes the one tallies with the other, and as one flea looks like another, until you will not miss their path, nor will they miss yours; (and this means) the traditions of the Israelites.''

Moreover, these matters are among the reports of the great events of the latter days, foretold by the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt;* these prophecies were preserved by reporters and narrators in books which were written and copied centuries before the events; and every day we see some of its parts fulfilled in exactly the same way without any addition or subtraction. This compels us to believe that the remaining part of those prophecies (including *ar-raj'ah*) must be true.

Now we come back to the topic in hand. We were discussing why a single verse is sometimes explained as referring to the Day of Resurrection and sometimes as describing *ar-raj'ah* or the re-appearance of Imām al-Mahdī (a.s.). It appears from the characteristics and details of the Day of Resurrection, mentioned in the Qur'ān, that it will be a day when no intermediate cause will hinder one from the signs of Allāh; there will remain no veil on the face of truth. All illusions will vanish and the signs of Allāh will appear in their perfect manifestation.

That day could exist side by side with this world, but it is obvious from the Qur'ān and *sunnah* that human beings, i.e., this species of homo sapiens who are descended from Adam and his wife, will become extinct in this world and only then will this great day dawn upon them.

The life of this world and the life of the Resurrection can exist side by side for different groups and species. The life of the period between death and the Day of Resurrection (*barzakh,* البرزخ) exists for our dead side by side with our life on this earth; neither does our life interfere with theirs, nor theirs with ours. Allāh says: *By Allāh! Most certainly We sent* (apostles) *to nations before you, but Satan made their deeds fair seeming to them; so he is their guardian today and for them is a painful punishment* (16:63).

This, therefore, is the reality of the Day of Resurrection, ''the Day on which men shall stand before the Lord of the worlds'' ''the Day when they shall come forth; nothing concerning them remains hidden from Allāh''. That is why sometimes even death is called Resurrection, because the veil of intermediate causes is lifted from the imagination of the dead person. 'Alī (a.s.) has said: ''Whoever dies his resurrection

begins.'' This subject will be explained, God willing in its appropriate place.

The traditions which prove *ar-raj'ah* in spite of their large number, are one in their essence. They show that the world is proceeding towards a day when the signs of Allāh will appear in their perfect manifestation; man will not disobey Allāh, but shall worship Him with a sincere and pure heart, untainted by the desires of this world; and he will not be deceived by Satan. At that time some dead persons — some friends of Allāh and some of His enemies — shall be returned to the world again, and the truth will be separated from the falsehood.

It appears from above that the Day of Return shall be one of the stages of the Day of Resurrection. But it will be a lesser manifestation, because there shall remain, at that time, the possibility, to a certain extent, of evil and mischief, which will be impossible on the Day of Resurrection.

And that is the reason why in some traditions the same verses have been said to be related concerning the re-appearance of Imām al-Mahdī (a.s.). It is because at his re-appearance also the truth will be manifested perfectly, though it will be less than on the Day of ''Return''.

There are traditions narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* that ''The days of Allāh are three: the Day of re-appearance, and the Day of Return, and the Day of Resurrection.'' Some of them say that ''The days of Allāh are three: the Day of Death, and the Day of Return, and the Day of Resurrection.''

The three days are one in their nature but different in degrees. It is because of this oneness of essence that a single verse is at different times interpreted by all three days.

The above discussion clearly shows that the Day of Return is not only possible, but a reality; and those who reject it have no reason to refute it.

سَلْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كَمْ آتَيْنَاهُمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ بَيِّنَةٍ وَمَنْ يُبَدِّلْ نِعْمَةَ اللهِ مِنْ
بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُ فَإِنَّ اللهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ - ٢١١ . زُيِّنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا
وَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَاللهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ
يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ - ٢١٢ .

Ask the children of Israel how many a clear sign We gave them; and whoever changes the favour of Allāh after it has come to him, then surely Allāh is severe in requiting (evil) (211). *The life of this world is made to seem fair to those who disbelieve; and they mock those who believe; but those who guard* (against evil) *shall be above them on the Day of Resurrection; and Allāh provides with sustenance whom He pleases without measure* (212).

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *Ask the children of Israel ... severs in requiting* (evil): It reconfirms and emphasizes the threat contained in (2:209), that Allāh shall seize the sinners, in the manner of the One who is Mighty and Powerful. It says: These Israelites are within your sight and hearing. They were the people to whom Allāh gave the Book and the rule and prophethood and territory; and provided them with good things and made them excel other nations. Ask them how many a clear sign We gave them; and then see from when they started and where they went. They changed the words of Allāh from their places; they followed some selfinvented things in opposition to Allāh, His Book and His signs. And all this was done in revolt after they were given the knowledge. Then Allāh punished them with. the most severe punishment: They went astray, became disunited, disagreed among themselves; they unlawfully ate the property of their brethren; their power was gone, their happiness vanished; and humiliation and wretchedness were stamped upon them in this world, and the chastisement of the Hereafter is more humiliating and then they shall not get any help.

This is the tradition of Allāh: whoever changes the favour of Allāh

and uses it wrongfully, Allāh surely chastises him and of course Allāh is severe in chastisement.

The sentence, *whoever changes the favour of Allāh ... then surely Allāh is severe in requiting* gives the general principle and describes the unchangeable habit of Allāh, so that the hearers may know the firm decree of Allāh in such cases.

Qur'ān: *The life ... make those who believe:* It explains the reason why the Israelites and the people like them went astray. The main reason is that the life of this world seems alluring to them. When materialism allures someone, it encourages him to fulfill the lust and desire of his heart and to satisfy his sensuous appetite; it makes him forget all truth and reality. The only aim of such a man remains to get whatever he can from this world status, dignity, wealth, beauty, and so forth. He makes use of everything to reach this goal — and 'everything' includes religion. Thus, he misuses religion to gain privilege and distinction. Religion becomes a means of honouring the leaders and the bosses and bestowing on them the prestige befitting their status and place in the world; it encourages the common man to seek nearness to those leaders, not to Allāh; it allows them to find ways to seek the favours of these nobles and leaders. This we see in the Muslim *ummah* today, just as it was seen in the Israelites before.

Those who disbelieve *kufr* (translated here as disbelief, الكفر) is apparently used in the Qur'ān in its literal meaning, i.e. to hide. In this general meaning it is comprehensive; it includes ''disbelief '' as well as ''hiding the truth''. The life of this world is made to seem fair not to the disbelievers only but to them also who hide any religious truth or change any religious favours. Accordingly, such a man also is hider of truth (*kāfir,* الكافر) who has been allured by the beauty of this life, and he also should prepare himself for the severe punishment.

Qur'ān: *but those who guard* (against evil) *shall be above them ... without measure.*: ''Those who believe'' of the preceding sentence has been changed in this sentence to *those who guard themselves* (against evil). It is to emphasize that mere belief (*īmān,* الايمان) without *taqwā* (guarding oneself against evil; piety, fear of Allāh, التّقوى) is of no use.

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللهُ النَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنزَلَ مَعَهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِيمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا
الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ فَهَدَى اللهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ
بِإِذْنِهِ وَاللهُ يَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ـ ٢١٣ .

Mankind was but one people; *so Allāh sent the prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and He sent down with them the book with the truth, so that it might judge between the people in that in which they had differed. And none differed about it but the very people who were given it, after clear signs had come to them, revolting among themselves; whereupon Allāh guided, by His will, those who believed to the truth about which they differed. And Allāh guides whom He pleases to the straight path.*(213)

GENERAL COMMENT

This verse explains why religion was promulgated and mankind obliged to follow it, and why differences occurred in it.

Mankind, having been created with a natural urge to remain together and cooperate with each other, were in the beginning one single group. Then occurred differences about the acquisition of the necessities of life. These differences could only be settled by creating laws to give each one his right and to make him respect the rights of others. Allāh has ordained the law and sent it down as religion, accompanied by good tidings of reward for those who obey and a warning of punishment for the offenders. This religion was made perfect by the institution of worship. All this was accomplished by sending the prophets and the apostles.

After that, people differed again — this time about the knowledge of religion, or about matters concerning the beginning and end of mankind. Thus, religious unity was disrupted and various groups appeared on the scene, and their differences contaminated the other

aspects of life.

These second differences only occurred because of the revolt of the very people who were given the book, after the fundamentals and characteristics of religion had been fully explained to them and the proof of Allāh had been completed for them.

It is clear that there were two differences: First, the difference about worldly gains, which was but natural; second, the difference about matters of religion which was based, not on nature, but on the revolt of mischief-makers. Then Allāh guided the believers to the truth about which they differed; and this guidance was done by His Will; and Allāh guides whomsoever He pleases to the straight path.

The divine religion is the only means of happiness and felicity for the human species, and it keeps life in order. It creates a balance between various human instincts and urges, and keeps them on the middle path, preventing them from going towards either extreme. Thus, there appears the best system and the highest discipline in the human life both of this world and of the Hereafter, the material as well as the spiritual.

This is an outline of the social and religious history of human beings, as given in this verse. The details may be seen in various verses throughout the Qur'ān.

HOW MANKIND CAME INTO BEING

It appears from various verses, found in various places in the Qur'ān, that mankind did not developed from any other species - neither from any animal nor from any plant. It is a species which was created by Allāh directly from the earth. There was a time when the sky existed and earth existed with the things of the earth; but there was no man. Then Allāh created a couple, male and female, of this species, and all present human beings are descended from that couple. Allāh says: *O men! Surely We created you of a male and a female, and made you into tribes and families, so that you may recognise each other ...* (49:13); and He says: *He it is who created you from a single being and of the same* (kind) *did He make his mate*. (7:189); again He says: *as the likeness of Adam*; *He created him from dust ...* (3:59)

The theory of scientists that one species changed into another, and that homo sapiens developed from some kind of ape or, going further back, originated from some water animal, is just a hypothesis. A hypothesis is not a definite fact; it is just a supposition made as a basis for reasoning, or as a starting point for academic investigation. There is no harm in treating it as a reality or as a possibility, because its only function is to provide a basis for scientific research, and to find out whether it can explain the causes and effects of a given matter. It has no more value than that. We discuss this subject fully under the verse (3:59), *Surely the likeness of ‘Īsā is with Allāh as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him ‘Be’ and he became.*

HIS COMPOSITION FROM SOUL AND BODY

When Allāh created this species, He created it composed of two parts; a material substance, the body, and a non-material one, the soul or spirit. Man’s body and soul remain together during his life in this world; then the body dies, the living soul departs, and thus man returns to his Creator. Allāh says: *And certainly We created man of an extract of clay, then We made him sperm, in a firm resting place, then We made the sperm a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made* (in) *the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We did grow it into another creation, so Blessed by Allāh, the Best of the creators. Then after that you will most surely die; then surely on the Day of Resurrection you shall be raised*. (23:12-16). (See at what stage Allāh says *did grow it into another creation.* The same meaning is found in the verse, *So when I have made him complete and breathed into him of My spirit, then fall down making obedience to him* (38:72). Then we come to the words of Allāh, where He describes the creation of man goes on to say: *And they said: What! when we have become lost in the earth, shall we* (even) *then be* (returned) *into a new creation? Nay! They are disbelievers in the meeting of their Lord. Say*: *The angel of death, who is given charge of you, shall cause you to die then to your Lord you shall be brought back* (32:10-11).

In this verse, Allāh first mentions the ‘argument’ of the unbelievers that there was no possibility of being raised to life again because all the limbs and organs of the body disintegrated and turned

to dust after death. Then comes the reply that the angel of death causes them to die and fully takes hold of them; they are something different from the mere body; the bodies are lost in the earth but ‘‘they’’, i.e. their souls, are neither lost, disintegrated nor dead.

We shall explain in a proper place the teaching of the Qur’ān about the soul of man.

HIS PERCEPTION AND CONNECTION WITH OTHER THINGS

Allāh made man and gave him perception, and created in him hearing, sight and the heart (wisdom). He has been given the quality of mind which is known as intelligence and thinking power. By those faculties, he looks at the present, finds out about the past and surmises about the future; he has a sort of comprehensive knowledge of the things around him. Allāh says: (Allāh) *taught man what he know not* (96:5); *And Allāh brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers, you did not know anything, and He gave you hearing and sight and the hearts* (wisdom) *so that you may give thanks* (16:78); *And He taught Adam all the names ...* (2:31).

Allāh has given him such faculties so that he can establish a relation and connection with all things and can derive benefit from all of them; he can establish that connection either directly or through instruments and machines, the aim all the time being to use them to his own advantage. Look at the innumerable discoveries and inventions, and you will know how Allāh has made everything subservient to man. For example, He says: *He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth* (2:29); *And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all, from Himself* (45:13).

HIS PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE

The two faculties — intelligence and the ability to exploit other things — produced a third wonderful faculty: to find out new avenues of knowledge and perception, so as to use them in his exploitation of other things to his advantage.

Suppose you were looking at this species of homo sapiens for the first time. You would be overwhelmingly astonished to see how each member of this species used an unlimited amount of knowledge and ideas to make his life comfortable. That knowledge and those ideas were acquired, analysed, compared and developed either through the five senses, which provided knowledge of the external world, or through the five faculties of the mind, or through the power of thought, using and re-using the knowledge acquired by those senses.

Then if you were to look at that knowledge and perception, you would find that they could easily be divided into two groups. First, that knowledge which had no direct bearing on man's own actions. For example, the perceiving of the earth, the sky, men, horses, etc. or that four was an even number, or that water was a liquid. Such percepts are acquired by man's reaction to the world outside his own being. To acquire those percepts, man does not have to have any intention or action on his own part; they are just information of the outside world for which he is not obliged to do anything.

The second group is opposite to the first one. You will hear him saying: This is good; that is bad; this should be done; that must be avoided; justice is good; injustice is evil. Then, also, you might find him thinking about the ideas of ruling and subjection; of mastership and slavery. Such thoughts and percepts have a direct bearing on his actions and activities. All his intentional actions depend on those percepts and knowledge. And, unlike the first group, these percepts do not originate outside his being; they are formed in his mind either involuntarily, by his instinct, or voluntarily, through his own thinking, or feeling. For example, he has a system for digestion and nourishment and another for reproduction. These systems are governed by some inner motivating forces which make him desire what helps in these functions and dislike what hinders him in pursuit of those pleasures. This inner reaction creates in him such emotions and feelings as love, hate, inclination and desire.

These emotions and feelings compel him to think about what is good and what bad, what desirable and what undesirable, what compulsory and what permissible, etc.

Then taking such ideas as a base, he decides his course of action and uses the things around him accordingly.

It is clear from the above that those ideas, morals or ethics (whatever

you call them) have no value unless and until they are acted upon. As mere ideas they are worthless. Therefore, we may call them practical knowledge.

As mentioned above, Allāh inspired man with these morals to prepare him for action and make him ready to exploit the hidden forces of the world: ‘‘in order that Allāh might bring about a matter which was to be done.’’ Allāh says: *Our Lord is He who gave to everything its creation, then guided it* (to its goal.) (20:50); *Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High, Who created, then made complete, and Who made* (things) *according to a measure, then guided* (them to their goal.) (87:1—3) The guidance, mentioned in these verses, is the general guidance bestowed on every creature, sentient as well as insentient, to lead it to the perfection of its being, and to encourage it to act for its own protection and maintenance.

Allāh says, especially about the man: *And* (I swear by) *the soul as it is made perfect, and He inspired unto it* (about) *its vices and its piety.* (91:7—8) It shows that man knows about vice and virtue through a divine inspiration which is implanted in his nature. These two percepts — ‘should do’ and ‘should not do’ — have no existence outside his mind; and perhaps that is why Allāh used the pronoun ‘‘Its’’ (i.e. soul’s) about vices and piety.

Also, Allāh says: *And this life of the world is nothing but a vain sport and play; and surely the abode of the Hereafter is certainly the life, if they but know* (29:64). Sport or play is in the attitude of the mind only. If the same action were done as a responsibility or as a job, it would loose its charm. Likewise, the aspect of this life — prestige, riches, progress, backwardness, mastership, servitude — are only in the mind of man. These aspects do not exist outside the mind. For example, we say, ‘a man who is president’ or ‘a cloth which is possessed’. Now, ‘a man’ and ‘a cloth’ are the things which exist outside the mind of the speaker; but that man’s ‘presidency’ and that cloth’s being ‘possessed’ are not so. These aspects are in the mind only.

HIS EXPLOITATION OF OTHER THINGS

To make a long story short, one of these ideas is the belief that men must take all necessary steps to preserve his own life; and because of this

belief he makes use of all the materials available to him. He exploits matter to fulfil his needs — the knife to cut, the needle to sew, pots to keep water, ladders to climb and innumerable such tools and machines for their benefit.

Likewise, he uses plants and vegetables for food, clothing, housing, etc. And subjugates animals to support his own existence; and takes advantage of their meat, blood, hide; hair, wool, tusks, horns, excrement, milk, bones and other such things. He benefits not only from the parts of their bodies, but also from their actions, as he rides a horse or uses the oxen for pulling carts and ploughs.

Man's exploitation does not end here. He goes further and exploits his own kind, subjugating other human beings, or taking advantage of them in other manners, as much as he can.

MAN IS SOCIAL BY NATURE

But man found, to his chagrin, that other men in their turn wanted to subjugate him in the same way as he was thinking about them. The result was a mutual understanding that they would take advantage of him as much as he benefited from them. This ''give-and-take'' prompted men to live in society and to cooperate with each other in their affairs. It necessitated the safeguarding of the rights of every member of that society to keep a balance between their rights and their duties. This is called social justice.

Society and social justice were founded on the unavoidable compulsion of the above-mentioned situation. Had it not been for that compulsion, man would not have agreed to it at all. This is the reality behind the claim that man is social by nature and that he follows the dictates of social justice! The fact is that this sociability and social justice came into being under the compulsion of the mutual tendency to exploit each other.

That is why whenever a man acquires power over his fellows, the dictates of social justice are forgotten ; and the mighty one ignores the rights of weaker ones. It is as much true in the case of individuals as in that of nations and states; and this has been going on from the early history of mankind until the present, which is called the age of civilisation and freedom!

This has been hinted in the verses: *Surely he* (i.e. man) *is unjust, ignorant* (33:72); *Surely man is created avaricious* (70:19); *Surely man is very unjust, very ungrateful* (14:34); *Nay! Verily man is wont to rebel as he sees himself free from want* (96:6-7).

Had social justice been the primary urge of his nature, most of society would have been overwhelmingly just and equitable. But what we see is always opposite to that. Always the demonstration of 'might is right' comes in front of our eyes; powerful ones coerce weaker ones into subjugation; victors humiliate the vanquished, and exploit them for their own advantage.

DIFFERENCE AMONG HUMAN BEINGS

So, there is the natural instinct to take advantage of others. Then there are the necessary differences among individuals in bodily physique, in habitat, habits, character and things like that, which in their turn create a difference in strength; some become stronger, others weaker. At this stage, the stronger men start ignoring the dictates of social justice and they no longer pay attention to the common weal of the society. The mighty one exploits the weaker one and gives him little in exchange; the victor takes advantage of the vanquished without giving him any benefit in return. The weak person makes it up by deception and trickery, always waiting for a chance to get the upper hand. And as soon as he gets a chance he avenges himself with a most severe reprisal.

Thus the difference leads to chaos, disorder and disturbance. Humanity comes near to extinction, and happiness and felicity depart from society.

It is this aspect to which the verse under discussion as well as some other verses refer: *And men were naught but a single people then they differed* (10:19); *and they shall continue to differ except those on whom your Lord has mercy* (11:118-119).

This disunity and difference was bound to occur in society. As has already been mentioned, men were different in the build of their bodies and the bent of the r minds. Of course, they were all human beings, and to a certain extent their activities and thinking were similar. But at the same time, their feelings, character and condition were different from each other. That resulted in a difference in their ambitions, sins and goals

of life, which in its turn motivated them to different types of actions, and finally led to the disruption of the social system.

That disruption and disturbance made it necessary to legislate such comprehensive and fundamental laws as could remove that disturbance, difference and disagreement by, giving each one his due right. Also, it was essential to make people obey those laws.

Nowadays, societies use one of two methods to enforce the law:-

1) Compelling the people to obey laws (which are legislated to make all people share in the means of livelihood and to give everyone what could take him to the perfection of his life) and discarding religious tenets like belief in God and higher moral values. Faith in God is completely eradicated, and morality is made to follow the trends of society. Whatever is liked by a sizeable section of the community is accepted as virtue. One day chastity is held in high regard, the next day it is ridiculed and debauchery becomes the norm of the time. One day, truth is respected, the next day falsity is glorified. One day trustworthiness, the next day embezzlement and so on.

2) Making people obey laws by character-building and by training them to respect the laws — but after removing religion and religious teachings from the training programs.

The first method uses the sheer force of the rulers, the second, combines force with moral teaching. Apart from the rot that sets into society as a result, both methods are based on ignorance and negate the reality of human existence. Man is created by Allāh; his existence depends on his Master; he came from Allāh and to Him he will return. On his departure from this world, his life will continue in the next world forever and ever without disruption. But the quality of the next life will depend upon this life — how he behaved here, how he maintained his relation with his Creator and which characteristics he developed and which qualities he acquired. If a man builds his life here on the foundation of the rejection of the divinity, he will surely destroy his ''self'' and ruin his next life.

Let us take the example of a caravan. The company of travellers start for a far away place with sufficient provision for the journey. They camp in a caravanserai for a while, no sooner are they lodged for the night then they start quarrelling among themselves. They do not stop at any misdeed; they fight with each other, murder and defame one another,

plunder belongings and commit many other atrocities. Then, appalled by the carnage, they sit together to find a way to save their lives and property. Someone says: ‘‘Let us jointly use, and benefit from, all these provisions, and allow every individual a right to enjoy them according to his service to the group. We have nowhere to go from this place. Anyone opposing this scheme will be severely punished.’’ Another person says: ‘‘Let us make a law to remove this difference; each of us shall concentrate on building his character; we must behave with kindness towards our companions, we should not deviate from the path of love, gallantry and nobility. Therefore, we should jointly enjoy the provisions which we have. After all, the provisions are for our own use in this very place.’’

There is no need to point out that both advisers are mistaken. They forget that the whole caravan is still on its way; and that the traveller, in all conditions and at all times, should remember his final destination and manage the affairs of his journey with only one goal in view: ‘‘What is the best way of his reaching home?’’ If he forgets this fundamental truth, there will be nothing left for him but becoming lost in the wilderness, and disaster and death.

A sensible adviser would have advised them with these words: ‘‘Use these provisions according to what you need of tonight; save the rest for other stopping places on the way; because your final destination is still very far and you must think to save some of the provisions for use after reaching home.’’

RELIGION REMOVES THE DIFFERENCE

This is why Allāh created laws, basing them on the belief of the oneness of Allāh, on true faith, on fine character and good deeds. In other words, these laws were made to teach people the reality of life, from the beginning upto its final destination; to make them realise that this life should be spent keeping the next life in view, and that this short life is but a preparation for the next one which will last forever and ever.

It is clear that it is only divine law which is based on knowledge. No other law was ever built on that foundation. Allāh says: *Judgement is not but Allāh’s; He has commanded that you worship not but Him; this is the right religion, but most people do not know.* (12:40) And He says in

the verse under discussion: *so Allāh sent the prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners and He sent down with them the book with the truth, so that it might judge between the people in that in which they had differed.* Here the sending of the prophets to bring good tiding and to warn has been joined with sending down the book which contains the laws and rules, so as to remove their differences.

Another verse says: *And they say*: *''There is nothing but our life in this world*; *we die and live and destroys us not but time ''*; *and they have no knowledge of that, they only conjecture.* (45:24) This insistence of theirs was not only to refute belief *in* the hereafter; its real motive was to wriggle out from the responsibilities which result from that belief. Reason says that, if you believe in the life hereafter, you must make this life subservient to that one; you must worship the Creator and obey the laws ordained by Him which will guide you in all the spheres of life: worship, social dealings, and the penal law. In short, belief in the hereafter makes it obligatory to follow the dictates of religion, to always keep the improvement of the next life in view. That was the reason why the unbelievers rejected that belief and based their social norms on the assumption that there was nothing beyond life in this world.

Again Allāh says: *they do not follow anything but conjecture, and surely conjecture does not avail against the truth at all. Therefore, turn aside from him who turns his back upon Our reminder and does not desire anything but the life of this world. That is the* (last) *reach of their knowledge ...* (53:28—30) In this verse Allāh makes it clear that they base their lives on conjecture and ignorance, while Allāh invites them to the Abode of Peace and His religion is based on truth and knowledges, and which the Prophet calls them towards what gives them life. Allāh says: *O you who believe! Answer* (the call of) *Allāh and the Apostle when he calls you to that which gives you life ...* (8:24). Life which is mentioned in this verse has been explained in the following verses:-

> *Is he who was dead then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people, like unto him whose similitude is that of one in utter darkness whence he cannot come forth*? (6:122)
>
> *Is then he who knows that what has been sent down to you from your Lord is the truth, like unto him who is blind? Only those*

possessed of understanding shall bear in mind. (13:19)

Say, this is my way. I invite (*you*) *unto Allāh; with clear sight* (are) *I and and he who follows me; and glory be to Allāh, and I am not of polytheists.* (12:108)

Say, are those who know and those who do not know alike? Only those possessed of understanding shall bear in mind. (39:9)

... an Apostle from among themselves who shall recite to them Thy communications and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them ... (2:129)

There are many verses like these in the Qur'ān extolling the virtues of understanding, calling people to acquire knowledge and follow the path of wisdom. It attaches so much importance to knowledge that it has named the pre-Islamic days ''the period of Ignorance''.

With this background, you will realise how unjust is the claim that religion is based on blind faith and ignorance, and is opposed to knowledge and learning.

This allegation was laid by some scientists. They spent their time in the natural and social sciences and they did not find in these physical sciences anything which could prove anything metaphysical. And they thought that the ''non-existence of a proof'' is a ''proof of non-existence''. It is obvious that they were mistaken in that conjecture. Going further, they looked at some myths which some entrenched interests had imposed on the masses in their countries, claiming that it was religion, and which in fact was nothing but polytheism — and Allāh and His Apostle repudiate the polytheists. Then they heard the preaching of priests exhorting the public to accept, without any questioning, the dogma and tenets of that mythical religion.

All these factors led them to declare that religion was against knowledge. But the true religion is too great to encourage ignorance or blind faith, or to exhort to act without understanding. The true religion never uttered a word without proper guidance or without an illuminating book. *And who is more unjust than the one who forges a lie against Allāh or gives the lie to the truth when it has come to him*? (29:68)

DIFFERENCE IN RELIGION ITSELF

Allāh informs us in this verse that differences and disunity in the affairs of

society and worldly life were removed for the first time by religion. If there are any laws which are apparently non-religious, they too are based on that first religious teaching.

Then Allāh informs us that later on there occurred differences in the religion itself. These differences were created by the followers of the religion, who were given the clear book and who possessed knowledge of it. It happened because of their revolt, injustice and rebellion. Allāh says: *He has prescribed for you the religion which He enjoined upon Nūḥ, and that which We have revealed to you, and that which We enjoined upon Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and Īsā, to establish the religion and be not divided there in ... And they did not become divided until after the knowledge had come to them, out of rivalry among themselves; and had not a word gone forth from your Lord till an appointed time, certainly the affair would have been decided between them ...* (42:13-14).

Also He says: *And mankind was not but a single people, then they differed and had not a word already gone forth from your Lord, the matter would certainly have been decided between them in respect of that Concerning which they disagree.* (10:19)

The word which had gone forth was the promise given to Adam: *and for you there is in earth an abode and a provision for a* (fixed) *time.* (7:24)

This difference among the followers of religion was based on rebellion and revolt, not on any dictate of nature. The divine religion is based on nature and normally people cannot go astray in *a* natural thing. Nor can the demand of nature change. Allāh says: *Then set your face upright for religion, in natural devotion* (to the truth) - *the nature made by Allāh in which He has made men; there is no change in the creation of Allāh; that is the right* (established) *religion ...* (30:30)

This in short is the foundation upon which this verse is based.

MAN AFTER THIS WORLD

Then Allāh informs us that man shall soon depart from this world and his intermediate station will be a place called *barzakh* (barrier, البرزخ), and the final destination is a place called the Hereafter.

His life, after this life, is an individualistic one; there will be no social

cooperation, mutual help or partnership. Man shall leave this physical world behind, returning to his Lord and Creator. There shall be no room there for that knowledge which we named earlier 'practical knowledge'. There will be no exploitation or taking advantage of others; no civilisation, social ''give-and-take'', nor any other of the paraphernalia connected with the life of this world. His only companion will be his deeds which he did in this world; he will see the good or bad results of his actions. Reality will become clear to him, and he will clearly know the Great News about which they had differed.

Allāh says:

And We will inherit of him what he says and he shall come to Us alone (19:80)

And certainly you have come to Us alone as We created you at first, and you have left behind your backs the things which We gave you; and We do not see with you your intercessors about whom you asserted that they were (Allāh's) *associates in respect to you; certainly the ties between you are now cut off and what you asserted is gone from you* (6:94)

There shall every soul become acquainted with what it sent before and they shall be brought back to Allāh, their true Master and what they did fabricate shall escape from them. (10:30)

What is the matter with you that you do not help each other? Nay! On this day they are submissive. (37:25—26)

On the day when the earth shall be changed into a different earth, and the heavens (as well); *and they shall come forth before Allāh, the One, the Subduer*. (14:48)

And that there is not for man (aught) *except what he strives for; and that his striving shall soon be seen; then shall he be recompensed for the fullest recompense*. (53:39-41)

These and many such verses clearly show that man's system of life shall change after death. There shall be no cooperation and no striving. There he shall see the result of his striving and the fruits of his actions. All his striving shall appear before him in its true colour and he shall be recompensed for it with the fullest measure.

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *Mankind was but one people* :*nās* (النّاس) translated here as 'mankind', literally means 'men'. *Ummah* (الامّة) translated here as 'people', means 'a group of men'. Sometimes it is used for only one man, as in the verses: *Surely Ibrahim was a* (*ummatan,* امّة) *people,* (devoutly) *obedient to Allāh* (16:120); sometimes for a long period, as in the verse: *and remembered after an* (*ummatin,* امّة) *a long time* (12:45) and in the verse: *And if We hold back from them the punishment until* (*ummatin ma'dūdatin,* امّة معدودة) *stated period of time* (11:8). A fourthusage is for religion, as in the verse: *And surely this* (*ummatukum ummatan wāḥidah,* امّتكم امّة واحدة) *your religion is one religion and I am your Lord, therefore, fear* Me (23:52) and, *Surely this your religion is one 'religion' and I am your Lord, therefore worship Me.* (21:92) In both these verses, according to some commentators, the word *ummah* (الامّة) has been used for 'religion'.

The word *ummah* (الامّة) is derived from *amma* (he had an aim, امّ); thus it is used for a company of people — not every company, but that which has a single aim, a single goal and a single ambition, and that unity of aim unites all the members, and makes them one people. That is why it is correct to use it for one man as well as for many; the other usages mentioned above are based on that basic meaning.

Anyhow, the sentence obviously refers to the beginning of humanity, when they were united, and lived a simple life and had simple thoughts. There were no differences or any tug-of-war in matters of life or livelihood, nor was there any disagreement about religion or religious matters.

That at that time there was no difference about matters of life is evident from the next sentence, *so Allāh sent the prophets ... so that it* (the book) *might judge between the people in that in which they had differed*, as it shows that the prophets were sent and the book was revealed to remove differences, because earlier they were one people. Thus the difference in matters of life occurred after the unity. And the proof that at that time there was no difference about matters of religion is seen in the following sentences, *And none differed about it but the very people who were given it ... revolting among themselves,* as it shows that the disagreement about religion was started by those who were given the book, which obviously

means that it started after the book was revealed.

Experience also supports this. Mankind is continuously climbing the heights of knowledge and thought and ever progressing along the path of learning and culture, year after year, and generation after generation. Thus civilisation goes forward day by day, new ways are found to fulfil even the slightest needs, natural and physical obstacles are removed and ever newer instruments are invented to make life more and more comfortable.

On the other hand, if we retrace our steps, going back towards the early days of humanity, every step will take us to people less and less acquainted with the secrets of life and the mysteries of nature, till we reach early man who knew almost nothing of the possibilities of life except those facts that were self-evident, and who used only a little imagination to gather his means of livelihood by the simplest methods. His food consisted of plants and meat which he obtained by hunting; he lived in caves, and defended himself with sticks and stones.

It is clear that a people who lived such a primitive life would not become entangled in any considerable disagreement; nor could there occur among them any lasting differences. They were in a way like a flock of sheep, everyone following the others, all remaining together for the purposes of food and abode.

This was in the very beginning. But, as we have described earlier, man had the natural urge to take advantage of others. And although the need to cooperate with each other in gathering the necessities of life compelled people to remain together, it did not prevent them from quarrelling with, and getting better of, each other. And every day man acquired new skills, and every new experience added to his store of knowledge. Whenever he used a newly-acquired expertise, it opened new avenues of progress and dexterity for him. Also, because of the dictates of nature, some individuals were stronger while others were weaker. Those who were stronger in body or mind tried to reduce others to virtual subjugation, taking more from them than they gave them in return. That was the beginning of the differences, which was only natural as it was based on the natural urge to take advantage of others, although it had been the same urge which had led to the creation of society.

It may seem strange that the same natural urge compelled men to remain together, on one hand, and led them to quarrel and find

differences, on the other. But there is nothing objectionable in the conflict between two natural demands, provided there is a third faculty above them to judge and decide, and to create a balance between them. For example, there is hunger which urges man to fill his stomach with whatever he can, even when the digestive system cannot tolerate it. There is a conflict between hunger and the power of digestion, but always there is the mind and reason to judge and decide between these two demands. It gives to each power only that which does not hinder the activities of the other.

The conflict between the two natural urges of marshalling others to one's service and cooperating with others as a single society is of the same category, because, Allāh decreed to remove that conflict by sending the prophets and revealing to them the book to decide and judge in the matters of their differences and contentions.

This is the correct interpretation of this verse. Unfortunately, some commentators have interpreted it in various other ways, but none of those interpretations conform to the meaning of the verse.

One of them has said: The verse says that all men were on the right path, because the differences began only when the book was sent down to them, and the followers of the book differed, revolting among themselves.

This man did not realize that the verse describes two conflicts, not one; and we have already explained this. Also he did not pause to think that if all men were already on the right path and there was no difference, then what was the justification of sending the prophets and revealing the book and thus giving them an opportunity to differ among themselves by revolt, and thus creating chaos in the world, sowing the seed of unbelief and sin, debauchery and immorality?

Another one has said: Mankind was one group in the meaning that all had gone astray. Otherwise, Allāh would not have said, *so Allāh sent the prophets ...*

This man did not ponder upon the verse with a clear mind. This going astray, to which he referred in this interpretation, has been indicated by Allāh in His words, *whereupon Allāh guided ... those who believed to the truth about which they differed*. It means that this difference and going astray had started because of the bad motives of the followers of the book and the scholars of religion after the book was

revealed and its signs were clarified for people. If people had already gone astray, if they had already been treading the path of disbelief, hypocrisy, sin and immorality, before the coming of the prophets and the book, how could it be attributed to the followers of the book and the scholars of religion?

A third interpretation: Mankind (*nās,* النّاس) in this verse refers to the Israelites only. Allāh says somewhere else about them: *but they did not differ until after knowledge had come to them, revolting among themselves.* (45:17) As the same words have been used in the verse under discussion, it means that the people referred to are the same.

But it is proof which has no validity at all. If in one verse, a virtue or vice is attributed to a certain nation, it does not mean that that characteristic is confined to that nation or is its special characteristic.

Even more worthless is the fourth interpretation: Mankind means Adam; and the verse says that Adam (a.s.) was one group on the right path; then his descendants differed among themselves, so Allāh sent the prophets ...

But the context of the whole verse disagrees with such a meaning. It is not possible to accept even a part of this interpretation, let along the whole.

A fifth interpreter said: ''Was'' (*kāna,* كان) in this sentence should not be taken as a past tense; rather it stands for ''is'' and shows a continuously existing reality, as in the words of Allāh: *and Allāh is* (*kāna,* كان) *Mighty, Wise* (48:19). In short, it means that mankind is by nature one group, because people are dictated by nature to remain together, and as cooperation and sociability is their natural urge, they have to live together in a society. But this togetherness breeds difference and conflicts. Therefore, Allāh sent the prophets and revealed the book to judge about that difference.

There are three defects in this interpretation:-

First: It supposes that sociability and cooperation is the primary natural urge. But it has been explained that it is not so. The primary urge is to take advantage of others and use them for one's own benefit. It is only when a man finds out that others have the same design about him that he comes to a compromise with them, and this ''give-and-take'' results in cooperation. So this cooperation is based on compromise, not on any natural urge. The Qur'ān also goes against

that supposition, as has been explained earlier.

Second: The mere fact that man is ‘‘social by nature’’, does not justify sending the prophets and revealing the book, unless it is mentioned that this ‘‘natural sociability’’ leads to conflict and disturbance. In other words, this interpretation makes it necessary to read this verse in this way: ‘‘Mankind is but one people (but that oneness breeds conflict) so Allāh sent the prophets :..’’. But the said interpreter does not accept that ‘conflict’ is implied in this sentence.

Third: This interpretation mentions only one conflict. But the verse clearly shows two conflicts — first, before the revelation of the book, when the differences were common to all people(*so that it might judge between the people in that in which they had differed*); and, second, after its revelation, which was confined to the religious scholars, and not common to all people (*And none differed about it* - i.e. about the book - *but the very people who were given it ... revolting among themselves*.) Thus there were two differences, one was after receiving the knowledge and based on revolt, the other was not so.

Qur’ān: *so Allāh sent the prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners :*

Ba‘th (البعث) literally means to revive, to awaken, to bring back to life. Its past tense, *ba‘atha* (بعث) has been translated here as `sent down', only to make the meaning clear; otherwise, ‘sent down’ is the translation of *arsala* (ارسل), not of *ba‘atha* (بعث).

Why did Allāh use here the word *ba‘atha* (awakened, revived, بعث) here and not *arsala* (sent down, ارسل) ? The early period of mankind, which is being discussed in this sentence, was a period of quietness and inactivity. And it was more relevant to say that they were awakened and revived than that someone was sent to them.

Perhaps that is also the reason why those representatives of Allāh are here referred to as prophets (*nabiyyīn,* النبيّين) and not apostles (*mursalīn,* المرسلين). It has been described in the first volume that the purpose of raising the prophets and revealing the books was to explain the truth to people, and .to teach them the realities of their existence, making them aware of the fact that they have been created by their Lord, Allāh Who has no colleague or partner in His divinity or power; and that they are to return to Him and then shall be resurrected and brought back to life on a great day; that presently they have halted in a mid way station

which has no more reality than a sport or play. Having realised this basic fact, they must keep it before their eyes in all situation and all their actions, always bearing in mind where they have come from, where they are, and what is their destination. This waking up to the realities of life is more appropriately described by the word *nabiyyīn* (prophets, النبيّين) because *nabī*(النّبى) means ''one who has the news (*nabā',* النّبأ)''.

Allāh sent the prophets: The authority and responsibility for sending the prophets is on Allāh alone. It is only He Who sends them. It proves their sinlessness in receiving the revelation and explaining it to the people. (This topic is described in detail at the end f this commentary).

The prophets were sent *as bearers of good tidings and as warners.* They brought the good news of the mercy of Allāh, and His pleasure and paradise for those who believe in Him and guard themselves against evil. And they gave the warning of the chastisement from Allāh, and His displeasure and Fire, to those who reject the truth and commit sins. The two aspects of prophethood — good tidings and warnings — are the most effective ways of keeping an average person on right path and making the prophetic mission a success, although some righteous servants of Allāh do good and desist from evil only for the sake of their Lord without thinking about any reward or punishment.

Qur'ān: *and He sent down with them the book with the truth, so that it might judge between the people in that in which they had differed: kitāb* (الكتاب) is on the paradigm of *fi'āl* (فعال) and means 'the written'. The word generally refers to anything written by pen. But as the covenants and decrees are confirmed through writing, it is not infrequently used for compulsory and obligatory commands, and for every confirmed fact or idea which is irrefutable. And it has been used in this meaning in numerous verses of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān itself is called the book (*kitāb,* الكتاب) with this very meaning; otherwise, it is the talk of Allāh. It is said in the Qur'ān: (It is) *a ''book'' which We revealed to you, abounding in blessings ...* (38:29); *Surely, prayer is* (compulsory) *on the believers* (*kitāban mawaqūtā,* كتبا موقوتا) *a timedordinance.* (4:103).

The words, *in that in which they had differed* show that the meaning is, ''Mankind was but one people, then they differed, so

Allāh sent the prophets ...''

The definite article ''the'' (*al*, ال) in 'the book' (*al-kitāb* ,الكتاب) indicates either the genus of book (and, accordingly refer to all divine books revealed to the prophets) or a known (andimplied) book. In later case, it would refer to the book of Nūḥ(a.s.), because Allāh says in the Qur'ān : *He has prescribed for you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nūḥ and .that which We have revealed unto you and that which We enjoined upon Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and 'Īsā ...* (42:13). This verse describes the grace ·and favour of Allāh by saying that the *sharī'ah* (Law) sent down to the Muslims combines in itself what was given piecemeal to the previous prophets and over and above it contains many new features revealed to the prophet of Islam. It means that the Law was given only to those great prophets who are named here: N ū ḥ , Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, 'Īsā and Muḥammad (peace be on them all).

Now, the verse under discussion (*He sent down with them the book* ...) clearly says that the *sharī'ah* was given in written form. Look at these two verses together and you will see that:-

First: Nūḥ (a.s.) was given a book containing the Law, and that book is surely referred to in this verse, *He sent down with them the book* either alone (if ''the'' is for a known and implied book) or with other divine books (if ''the'' denotes the genus of the book).

Second: The book of Nūḥ was the first divine book containing the *sharī'ah.* Had there been any other such book before him it would have contained a Law to judge between the people, and Allāh would have mentioned that *sharī'ah* in verse (42:13).

Third: The period referred to in the sentence, *Mankind was but one people* was the era before the mission of Nūḥ (a.s.) and his book decided and judged between the people in their differences.

Qur'ān: *And none differed about it but the very people who were given it, after clear signs had come to them, revolting among themselves*:

It has been explained that it refers to the difference about the matters of religion among the followers of the religion. As the religion is based on the nature of man as created by Allāh (*Then set your face uprightly for the* (right) *religion — the nature made by Allāh in which He had made men* — 30:30), Allāh attributed these differences to the revolt of the followers and the scholars of the religion.

The words *but the very people who were given it* indicate the origin of the religious differences about the meaning of the book. It does not say that every one who goes astray or follows a false religion is a rebel, although it is true that he has lost his way. Allāh would not accept the excuses of a rebel; but He might accept the entreaties of those who were confused and could not find the right path. Allāh says: *The way* (to blame) *is only against those who do injustice to the people and revolt in the earth unjustly ...* (42:42); *And others have confessed evil* (one); *may be Allāh will turn to them* (in mercy); *surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful ... And others are made to wait Allāh's command — whether He will chastise them or whether He will turn* (in mercy), *to them; And Allāh is All-knowing, All-wise* (9:102—106)*; Except the weakened ones from among the men and the women and the children who have not in their power the means nor do they find a way; so these, it may be, Allāh will pardon them, and Allāh is the Clement, Oft forgiving* (4:98—99)

Moreover, nature may go hand in hand with forgetfulness or doubt, but it cannot with revolt and intentional transgression. That is why the verse uses the words of revolt especially for those who knew the book and for whom the signs were made clear. Allāh says: *And* (as to) *those who disbelieve in and reject My signs, they are the inmates of the Fire, in it they shall abide.* (2 39) There are numerous verses of this meaning in the Qur'ān; and in all of them the disbelief has been made conditional on the rejection of the signs of Allāh and then it is followed by the threat of punishment.

In short, this sentence shows that the second differences began because of the rebellion of the scholars of the book, after they were given knowledge of it.

Qur'ān: *whereupon Allāh guided, by His will, those who believed to the truth about which they differed. And Allāh guides whom He pleases to the straight path.*

the truth about which they differed explains the subjects of the differences and that it was the truth with which the book was sent down (''the book with the truth'').

At this juncture, Allāh guided the believers to the truth in both differences: differences in affairs of this life, and differences in the matters of religion. The guidance of the believers was *by His will,*

because they could not make it binding upon Allāh to guide them, for the simple reason that there is none to impose upon Him. It is only He Himself who takes upon Himself whatever He pleases. Therefore, the guidance was by His will; if He were not pleased, He would not have willed and would not have guided.

Accordingly, the sentence, *And Allāh guides whom He pleases to the straight path* gives the reason of ''by His will''. He guided them because it is His discretion to guide whom He pleases, nobody can impose upon Him to guide this or to guide that. And He surely willed to guide the believers to the straight path.

Looking at the verses as a whole, we come to know the following:-

First: The definition of religion: Religion is a way of life which contains the good of this world in a manner that ensures perfection of the next life - the life that is the real and eternal one near to Allāh.

It means that the *sharī'ah* must contain the necessary laws for this worldly life and one's livelihood.

Second: Originally religion was promulgated to remove natural differences; then it was perfected to remove both types of differences; then it was perfected to remove both types of difference — the natural ones and the un-natural ones emanating from the rebellion of religious scholars.

Third: Religion goes on perfecting itself until its laws cover all the possible needs and eventualities of life. When it reaches that stage of perfection it is finalised and no other religion comes after it. Conversely, if a religion is the final one, it must be comprehensive enough to cover all eventualities and fulfil all the needs of life. Allāh said: *Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allāh and the Last of the prophets...* (33:40); *and We revealed unto you the book, explaining clearly everything ...* (16:89*); and most surely it is a mighty book; falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor f r o m behind it* ... (41:41-42).

Fourth: Every succeeding *sharī'ah* was more perfect than the preceding one.

Fifth: Why were the prophets sent and the books revealed? In other words, what was the reason for the prophetic mission? Man, by his nature, develops towards differences in matters of life, as much as he progresses towards social cooperation. As it is nature itself which

leads to differences, it is not capable of removing them. How can it repel a thing when it is forcefully pulling it towards itself? Therefore, Allāh took it upon Himself to remove that conflict; and He sent the prophets with the laws to lead men to their perfection — real perfection which is a part of their creation. Allāh says: *Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it* (to its goal.) (20:50) It shows that Allāh completes the creation of everything and guides it to its perfection. The creation of man is completed when he is guided to his perfection in both lives. Also He says: *All do We aid — these as well as those — out of the bounty of your Lord; and the bounty of your Lord is not confined.* (17:20) It means that Allāh aids out of His bounty everyone who is in need of His aid in his life and existence; He gives him what he deserves. His bounty is neither confined nor limited, so far as Allāh is concerned. If there is any limitation, it is from man's side, not from his Creator's.

Obviously, man cannot perfect himself, because it is his own nature which is the case of this defect. As it is nature which leads to the conflict, and as that nature is unable to mend what it has damaged, the reform (if there is to be any) must come from somewhere outside nature — it must come from the Creator; and it came in the form of prophethood guided by divine revelation. The sending of the prophets for this reform and removal of conflict has been given the name of *ba'th* (awakening, revival, البعث); and never has this verb been attributed, in the Qur'ān, to anyone except Allāh, although the prophetic calls, like everything else, have some connection with their place and time.

Prophethood is a divine (say, if you will, unseen) condition which has the same relation to general human perception and activity as wakefulness has to sleep. The prophet receives the knowledge by which the conflicts and differences of human life can be removed. This perception received from the unseen is called, in the language of the Qur'ān 'revelation'; and the quality and condition of receiving that revelation is called 'prophethood'.

Therefore, the reason for initiating the prophetic mission rests on the following factors:-

(1) Human nature leads man to social cooperation;
(2) At the same time it creates friction and conflict;

(3) Nature itself cannot remove that conflict;
(4) Therefore, a force outside of nature, should intervene to remove that conflict;
(5) Allāh completes creation and in His mercy, has taken it upon Himself to guide everything to its perfection;
(6) As a result of that undertaking, He sent prophets and revealed to them the book to reform human society.

All these factors are proved by reason and experience.

Never has man desisted from exploiting others to his advantage; never has that exploitation, after action and reaction, failed to created a society; never has any society been free from conflict; never has that conflict been removed without social laws; and never has human wisdom been able to make such laws which could cut away all the roots of conflict.

Look at the present world. See the chaos in human society, the degradation of moral values, the never-ending chain of wars, the destruction of crops and cattle, the fightings which exterminate millions and millions of people, the autocracies, the subjugation of nations, the abasing of the human spirit, the usurping of lives and property; you will find all these and much more. And it is happening in this, the twentieth century, the century of civilisation, the age of progress, the era of culture and science. What could have been the situation in the old day — the age of ignorance and darkness?

That the teaching and training of religion, emanating from the prophets and revelation, have the ability to eradicate this conflict is proved by reason and experience.

Reason: Religion calls people to real knowledge, high ethics, and noble deeds. Humanity can reach the highest peak of perfection by following such teachings.

Experience: Islam has proved it during the short period when it had control over Muslim society, as will be explained, God willing, in a proper place.

Sixth: The religion, which has been sent as the last of all religions, proves that humanity has reached the final stage of its completion and perfection. That is why the Qur'ān has decreed that prophethood has come to its end with Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.). His religion will never be abrogated, and his *sharī'ah* will remain in force till the end of the world.

It means that human perfection, individual as well as collective, shall always, remain within the limits of the laws ordained by Islam. There can never arise a situation for which Islam has no guidance.

It is a prophecy of the Qur'ān confirmed by the history of humanity in the last fourteen centuries. Mankind has, in this period, progressed tremendously, and reached unimaginable heights in the field of the material and. physical sciences. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about his ethics and morality. It has not progressed even one step since that time. Rather, it could be claimed that in this respect it has taken many steps backwards. Thus humanity has not progressed as a whole. It is a lop-sided development. Man has strengthened his body, neglecting his soul, which has become weaker.

It is clear from above that the laws of Islam have as much relevance in this era as they had fourteen centuries ago. And they will not loose their relevancy even in the future.

Some people say: The laws of religion were made for the reform of man and the good of society. If society changes, and climbs further towards the summit of perfection, religion and its law also must change, to stay in step with the changing society. It is no secret that the difference between this age and that when the Qur'ān came down and Islamic laws were promulgated is far greater than the difference between the times of Mūsā and 'Īsā (a.s.) and that of the Prophet of Islam. This vast difference demands the abrogation of the laws of Islam, so that other laws, more appropriate to a modern progressive society, can be ordained.

Reply: Religion does not aim only at the material and physical perfection of man. It looks at the human being as a whole, and seeks to make him perfect both physically and spiritually, so that he may attain both material and spiritual bliss. Its deal is the social man who is perfect from the above-mentioned point of view, not a social man who might be perfect in technology and politics but bankrupt in other aspects of humanity. These people looked at societies based on materialism. Matter is always in change, climbing up the ladder of perfection, and the same is true of materialistic societies. These people thought that a society based on religion would also always be subject to change and abrogation. But they over-looked the fundamental difference between the two societies. They forgot that Islam does not aim at a lop-sided development of man; instead, it seeks well-balanced development, where man becomes perfect

as a whole, both in body and soul. Before demanding the abrogation of Islam, they should produce an individual or a society which combines religious tenets and material progress. Then they should say what deficiency has been left therein which should be completed by a new *sharī'ah,* or what weakness is there which needs a new law. Unless and until they produce such a society to point to the supposed defects, they have no justification in claiming that Islam should be abrogated.

Seventh: The prophets (peace be on them all) were sinless and protected from error and sin.

SINLESSNESS OF THE PROPHETS

'Iṣmah (العصمة) which is generally translated as ''sinlessness'', literally means 'protection'. The 'protection' with which we are concerned here, is of three kinds:

(1) protection from error in receiving the revelation,
(2) protection from error in communicating and imparting that revelation to the people, and
(3) protection from sins. Sin here means any thing or action which goes against the obligatory command of Allāh, and thus becomes a disgrace for the man. In other words, any word or action which is against the dictates of the servitude, homage and devoutness of man towards his Lord.

'Iṣmah (العصمة) in religious terminology, means the presence, in the man concerned, of a quality which protects him from committing any thing unlawful, any error or sin.

So far as *'iṣmah* from extraneous things (i.e. other than receiving revelation and its communication, and sins) is concerned — for example, mistakes in perception by any of the five senses, or misjudging the benefit or harm of a medicine, food or other such thing, etc. — it is not relevant to this verse which we are now discussing.

Anyhow, the Qur'ān definitely proves that every prophet was *ma'ṣūm* (sinless, protected from mistakes, المعصوم) in all the above mentioned three aspects.

'Iṣmah from error in receiving the revelation and in its communication to the people: The following sentences, in the verse under discussion, prove these two aspects: *so Allāh sent the prophets,*

as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and He sent down with them the book with the truth, so that it might judge between the people in that in which they had differed. And none differed about it but the very people who were given it, after clear signs had come to them, revolting among themselves; whereupon Allāh guided, by His will, those who believed to the truth about which they differed.

These words show that Allāh sent them to bring the good tidings and to warn; and sent the book with them (and this was the ‘‘revelation’’), so that they might guide the people to true belief and true deeds. This was the aim and object of Allāh in appointing the prophets. And He says: *errs not my Lord, nor does He forget.* (20:52) It proves that Allāh errs not in His action, and makes no mistakes in His affairs; when He wills a thing, He wills it in its proper way which creates the desired effect without fail; when He proceeds with a work, the result is produced without any mistake. It is as it should be, because in His hand is creation and command, and for Him is power and judgement. And He sends prophets by revealing to them the true knowledge of religion and teaching it to them — and without fail it must be so; of necessity the prophets must receive and understand the revelation correctly; and He sends them to communicate that revelation to their people, and without fail it must be so; without any error or mistake they must communicate it as Allāh has willed. Allāh says: *Surely Allāh attains His purpose; Allāh indeed has made a measure for everything* (65:3); *and Allāh is predominant over His affair.* (12:21)

Another verse which proves these two types of *‘iṣmah* is as follows: *The Knower of the Unseen; so He does not reveal His secrets to any except to him whom He chooses for an apostle; for surely He makes a guard to march before him and after him, so that He may know that they have indeed delivered the messages of their Lord, and He encompasses what is with them and He takes account of everything.* (72:26—28) It is clear that Allāh reserves His revelation for His messengers; so He reveals His secrets to them and supports them by guarding them from in front of them and behind them; and encompasses what is with them to protect the revelation from decay and alteration, whether that alteration comes from Satan or others; and it is done to make sure that they have indeed correctly delivered the messages of their Lord. Another verse reports the words of the angels of revelation: *and we do not come down but by the*

command of your Lord; His is whatever is before us and whatever is behind us and whatever is between these; and your Lord is not forgetful. (19:64) These verses prove that the revelation right from the start of its descent, to its reaching down to the prophets and up to its communication and delivery to the people is duly protected and guarded against change and alteration, from whatever source it might come.

These two verses prove the *'iṣmah* of the prophets in receiving and delivering the revelation only; but they may also be used, with the addition of one rational premises, to prove their *'iṣmah* from sins. For an average man, actions speaks as loudly as, if not louder than, words. If someone does a certain thing, his action proves that in his eyes that work is good and lawful; it is as if he was announcing its legality and virtue in so many words. If a prophet committed a sin, while he forbade it to his people, it would mean that he was preaching two contradictory things: his action allowed a thing, while his words forbade it. Thus he would be preaching two things contradictory to each other. And preaching contradictory things is against the preaching of truth, because one order would belie and invalidate the other. One who reports two contradictory items cannot be said to be reporting the truth. Therefore, *'iṣmah* of the prophet in delivering the message of Allāh totally depends upon his *'iṣmah* from the sins.

There are many other verses which prove *'iṣmah* of the prophets in all its aspects:-

(a) *These are they whom Allāh has guided; therefore, follow their guidance.* (6:90) All the prophets were decidedly guided by Allāh. And Allāh says: *and whomsoever Allāh lets go astray, there is no guide for him; and whom Allāh guides, there is none that can lead him astray; is not Allāh Mighty, the Lord of retribution?* (39:36—37) Also He says: *whomsoever Allāh guides, he is the rightly guided one.* (18:17) According to these verses those who are guided by Allāh can never be led astray by any misleading agency. In other words, they are free from all misguidance; and every sin is a misguidance, as is shown by the words of Allāh, *Did I not enjoin on you, O children of Adam! that you should not worship the Satan? Surely he is your open enemy, and that you should worship Me; this is the right way. And certainly he led astray a great multitude from among you. What! could not then understand?* (36:60—62) In this verse, Allāh counts every sin as

going astray, a misguidance as a result of the agency of Satan ; at the same time regarding it as the worship of Satan. Looking at all the above verses we find that:-

Allāh guided all the prophets by His guidance.

Anyone guided by Allāh's guidance can never be misled, can never go astray.

Every sin is a misguidance ; every sin is straying from the right path.

It follows that the prophets of Allāh were sinless, free from every sin and protected from every mistake in receiving and delivering the revelation of Allāh.

(b) *And whoever obeys Allāh and the Apostle these are with those upon whom Allāh has bestowed the favours of the prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the righteous ones; and excellent are these as companions!* (4:69)

Also He says: *Keep us on the right path, the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, not* (the path) *of those inflicted with Thy wrath, nor* (of those) *gone astray.* (1:5—7)

The prophets are described as of those upon whom Allāh has bestowed His favours; and those upon whom Allāh's favours have been bestowed are other than those who have gone astray. It means that the prophets never went astray. If they had committed a sin, they would have gone astray (as explained above). Also, if they had committed any error or mistake in receiving or communicating the revelation, they would have gone astray. There fore, the two verses together prove the *'iṣmah* of the prophets in all these aspects.

(c) *These are they on whom Allāh bestowed favours, of the prophets of the posterity of Adam, and of those whom We carried with Nūḥ, and of the posterity of Ibrāhīm and Israel, and of those whom We guided and chose. When the signs of the Beneficent* (God) *were recited to them, they fell down prostrating* (in obedience) *and weeping. But there followed after them an evil generation, who neglected prayer and followed sensual desires, so they shall soon meet (the result of their) sin.* (19:58—59)

This verse attributes two virtues to the prophets: first, the bestowing of favours (*upon whom Allāh bestowed favours*); second, guidance (*whom We guided and chose*). Then it goes on praising them for the highest degree of obedience, devoutness and humility before Allāh.

Afterwards, it condemns the unworthy following generation for their evil traits. Obviously, we see here two opposite groups: one, the praiseworthy ones deserving to be honoured by Allāh; the other, the condemned ones. This second group has been described as those who followed sensual desires and who will soon see the result of their sins. It clearly means that the first group, i.e. the prophets, did not follow their desires and will not be overtaken by sin. Such sincere servants of Allāh could not commit any sin, even before their appointment as prophets. Had they committed any sin even before their receiving prophethood, they would have surely come under the condemnation, *neglected prayer and followed sensual desires, so they shall soon meet* (the result of their) *sin.* But, as we explained, theirs is a group of diametrically opposite to the condemned ones.

This Qur'ānic proof is somewhat similar to the rational proof given for. the *'iṣmah* of the prophets, which is as follows:-

The sending of the prophets and the showing of miracles in their hands is the confirmation of their words. It means that they cannot tell a lie. Also, it is an endorsement that they have the ability to communicate the message of Allāh to their people. But a man who indulges in sins and such actions as would harm a project, cannot be said to be qualified to preach the usefulness of that project or to invite the people to participate in it. Therefore, when Allāh showed miracles in the hands of the prophets it not only authenticated their claim of prophethood, but also confirmed that they could not commit error in receiving and delivering the divine revelation, and that they faithfully obeyed all the commands of Allāh and desisted from all such things which were disliked by Allāh. In other words, they were sinless in all its aspects.

Question: All intelligent people take help, in all varieties of social needs and communications, from those who may discharge their duties to a certain extent, even if their delivery of the message or their performance in that social work is not quite perfect. What is wrong if Allāh sends prophets who are capable of doing His work to a certain extent, even if occasionally they indulged in sin?

Reply: Men overlook such defects in their agents for one of two reasons: either they do not mind a little short-coming and deficiency, or their aim is to get only that amount of service which the agent is qualified for.

But both these alternatives are unacceptable for a divine scheme. These alternatives show the deficiency and shortcoming of not only the agents but also of the principal. Allāh cannot be like us mortals.

An Objection: Allāh says, *why should not then a company from every party from among them go forth that they may acquire* (proper) *understanding in religion, and that they may warn their people when they come back to them, so that they may be cautious?* (9:122)

Here Allāh has entrusted Muslim scholars with the task of warning their people. And those scholars are not sinless.

Reply: Muslim scholars (admittedly not sinless) have been allowed by this verse to communicate to their people what they have learned about religion. It does not say that Allāh confirms their words of warning, nor that their words are recognised by Allāh as a divine proof over people. It is this divine confirmation and recognition which is the basic characteristic of prophethood, not mere warning.

(d) *And We did not send any apostle but that he should be obeyed by Allāh's permission* ... (4:64) The aim of sending an apostle is that he be obeyed, and the verse confines the aim to only this one thing. People should obey the apostle in both his words and actions, because preaching is done in both ways. And both these aspects of obedience are covered by Allāh's permission. If an apostle erred in understanding the revelation or in its delivery, it would still be Allāh's will, according to this verse, that people should obey and follow him. But Allāh only permits truth. How can His permission be related to an error or mistake? Thus, it is clear that an apostle cannot err in receiving or delivering a revelation. Likewise, if an apostle were to commit a sin, in words or actions, an impossible situation would arise. Sin is disliked by Allāh, forbidden by Him. But the verse enjoins people to obey and follow their apostle. Thus that same sin would, at the same time, be for the people an act of obedience which they would be required to follow and copy. It would mean that Allāh had, at one and the same time, willed it and not willed it, ordered it and forbade it; liked it and disliked it! As explained earlier, it would be an impossible order. We do not mean an order to do an impossible work (which, some do say, can be given by Allāh!): we mean that giving such an order is in itself an impossibility, because it would be, at one and the same time, an order and a non-order, a will and non-will, a liking and non-liking, a praise and non-praise, a condemnation and non-condemnation!!

(e) *so that there may not remain any argument for people against Allāh, after the apostles* ... (4:165) It is clear that Allāh wills to intercept the excuse which people might think of for their sins and disobedience; and that the only way of dismissing such excuse is by sending the apostles to them. The coming of the apostles could cut their excuse short only if the apostles themselves desisted from all those things which Allāh does not like — be it in word or action. Otherwise, people could easily give their apostles' sins and mistakes as their excuse, and that argument would be valid against Allāh. Therefore, if Allāh had sent a non-*ma'sūm* apostle, He would have defeated His own purpose.

Question: It is accepted that the verses prove that the prophets do not commit any mistake or sin. But this does not prove that they had *'iṣmah. 'Iṣmah,* as defined by scholars, does not mean merely 'not committing any sin'; it is ''a faculty which protects a man from committing any sin or mistake''. Doing or not doing a work does not prove that the man concerned possesses the faculty, or characteristic, of that doing or not doing. The verses prove that they did not commit any sin; while to prove *'iṣmah* it should be proved that they could not commit any.

Answer: What is needed for proving the subject matter of this verse, is only the fact that the prophets did not commit any sin or mistake. And the questioner accepts that the verses prove it.

To prove that this fact was based on a characteristic or faculty of the prophets, look up the subject of 'miracle' in the first volume. There it was shown that the verse, *Surely my Lord is on the straight path* (11:56), and *Surely Allāh attains His purpose; Allāh indeed has made a measure for every thing* (65:3) prove that every happening depends on a cause which brings it into being. Now in the case of a prophet, we see that all his actions throughout his life are invariably correct, proper and in obedience to Allāh. This firm and unchanging characteristic shows that there must be a faculty in his soul which protects him from committing any sin or mistakes, and causes all his actions to be in accordance with the commands of Allāh. And that faculty is *'iṣmah.*

It is accepted that all actions of a prophet occur by his own will, as do our own actions. But his actions are always in obedience to

Allāh, while our actions are sometimes in obedience and sometimes in disobedience. An action is said to occur by our will when it is based on our knowledge and discretion. Our actions differ in obedience and disobedience because of a difference in the knowledge and will from which they emanate. If our knowledge and will demand to fulfil the dictates of servitude by obeying the divine command, obedience comes into being. If, on the other hand, our knowledge and will prefer the pursuit of pleasure and the satisfaction of lust, then disobedience and sin occur. In short, the difference in the quality of our actions, obedience or disobedience, is caused by the difference in our knowledge and will. Had our knowledge and will remained unchanged throughout our life, all our actions would have been of one type only - either a life-long obedience to Allāh, or, God forbid, an unbroken chain of sins. As the actions of a prophet are invariably, according to the dictates of piety and in obedience to Allāh, it follows that the knowledge and will from which his actions emanate are healthy ones, invariably good and virtuous. In other words, it is ingrained in his mind and soul that he must always serve and obey Allāh. It is this firmly-rooted knowledge which is called a faculty, characteristics or trait, like the faculty of chastity, of bravery, of justice, and so on. When we admit that a prophet always obeys Allāh and never commits any sin, we accept that he possesses a spiritual quality or faculty which always keeps him on right path and protects him from sin and mistakes. And that faculty is *'iṣmah.*

Also, we have shown that a prophet does not commit any error or mistake in receiving or delivering the divine revelation. It means that he possesses a spiritual quality which protects him from such mistakes.

If we say that a prophet does not have this spiritual faculty or characteristic (while it is known that he does not commit any sin or mistake) then it would mean that this unchanging habit (i.e. always following the divine command and desisting from mistake and sin) is not related to any spiritual or psychological trait of his own - in other words, it is caused directly by the will of Allāh, and that the prophet has no choice, option or will of his own in his actions; in short his actions are not caused by his knowledge and will. But it is already admitted that the actions of the prophet are based on his knowledge and will just like those

of other human beings.

'Iṣmah comes from Allāh; He creates in the prophet a cause from which all his actions emanate — the actions which are done by his own will and are always in obedience to Allāh; and that cause is the firmly-rooted knowledge — in other words, the characteristic, trait or faculty.

ABOUT PROPHETHOOD

Allāh uses two words for those who received His revelations so as to guide people to the right path. These words are *rasūl* (apostle, messenger, الرّسول) and *nabī* (prophet, النّبىّ), which divide, or almost divide, them into two groups, Allāh says:... *and the prophets and the witnesses shall be brought up ...* (39:69); *On the day when Allāh will assemble the apostles, then say: What answer were you given?* (5:109) *Rasūl* (الرّسول) means the one who brings the message (*risālah,* الرّسالة);*nabī* (النبى) is the one who brings the news (*naba',* النّبأ) *Rasūl* (الرسول) has the distinction of being an intercessor (or intermediary) between Allāh and His creatures. *Nabī* (النبى) has the distinction of having the knowledge of Allāh and from Allāh.

It is said that *rasūl* (الرّسول) is the one who is sent by Allāh and commissioned to convey the divine message to the people**;** and *nabi* (النّبىّ) is the one who is sent by Allāh, whether he is told to convey the message or not. According to this interpretation, the relationship between the Apostle and Prophet is such that all apostles are prophets but not all the prophets are apostles.

But the words of Allāh do not support this view. For example, Allāh says: *And remember Mūsā in the Book; surely he was one purified and was an apostle, a prophet.* (19:51) The aim of this verse is to praise Mūsā and show his greatness and in such a context the adjectives should progress from general to distinctive and not *vice versa.*

Also at another place, Allāh says: *And We did not send before you any apostle or prophet but ...* (22:52) This verse joins the apostles and the prophets together and then uses the verb ''to send'' (*irsāl*, الارسا ل)for both, making all of them apostle (*mursal,* المرسل)

But there are other verses which apparently show that everyone who

was sent by Allāh to people was a prophet. See, for example, … *and the book shall be laid down, and the prophets and the witnesses shall be brought up* ... (39:69); ... *but he is the Apostle of Allāh and the Last of the prophets* ... (33:40); and also the verse under discussion, ... *so Allāh sent the prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners* ... All these verses show that the prophets were sent with a divine message to people. Then what is the significance of the verse mentioned above, … *and was an apostle and a prophet?* Probably, the two words have been used here in their literal sense: Mūsā was a Messenger of Allāh and had the knowledge and information of the signs of Allāh and His secrets.

Likewise, the next-mentioned verse (*And We did not send before you any apostle or prophet but* ….) may be taken to mean that the prophet and the apostle both are sent to the people, but the prophet is sent to convey to them information of the unseen, as he knows the divine secrets, and the apostle is sent to bring them something more than a prophetic communication. This may be inferred from the verses, like: *And every people had an apostle; so when their apostle came, the matter was decided between them with justice* ... (10:47) and *nor we chastise until We raise an apostle.* (17:15) Accordingly, the prophet explains to people what is good for their lives in this world and in the hereafter, the roots of the religion and its branches, as the mercy of Allāh decides to guide the people to their bliss and felicity; and the apostle brings to people a special message to complete the proof over them, a message, rejection of which brings destruction and chastisement in its wake. Allāh says: … *that there may not remain any argument for people against Allāh after the apostles*. (4:165)

In short, the words of Allāh do not show any difference between the two except what appears from their literal meaning. And it leads us to the same conclusion which we have mentioned earlier, i.e., apostle has the distinction of being an intercessor (or intermediary) between Allāh and His creatures, and the prophet has the distinction of having the knowledge of Allāh and from Allāh.

We shall later quote the traditions of the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* about the difference between an apostle and a prophet.

The Qur'ān very clearly says that there were numerous prophets, and that Allāh has not described all of them in His Book. For example, Allāh says: *And certainly We sent apostles before you*: *there are some*

of them that We have mentioned to you and there are others whom We have not mentioned to you ... (40:78)

There are twenty odd prophets mentioned by name in the Book of Allāh: 'Ādam, Nūḥ, Idrīs, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Ibrāhīm, Lūṭ, Ismā'īl, Alyasa', Dhu '1-kifl, Ilyās, Yūnus, Isḥāq, Ya'qūb, Shu'ayb, Mūsā, Hārūn, Dāwūd, Sulaymān, Zakariyyā, Yaḥyā, Ismā'īl Ṣādiqu '1-wa'd[3], 'Īsā, and Muḥammad, May Allāh bless them all.

Some other prophets have been mentioned, but not by name. Allāh says: *Did you not look at the chiefs of the children of Israel after Mūsā, when they said to a prophet of theirs; Raise up for us a king ...* (2:246); *Or like him who passed by a town, and it had fallen down ...* (2:259); *When We sent to them two, and they rejected both of them, so We strengthened* (them) *with a third* ….(36:14); *Then they found one from among Our servants whom We had granted mercy from Us and whom We had taught knolwedge from Ourselves*. (18:65); *the grandchildren* (2:136).

There are some about whom it is not clear whether they were prophets or not, like the boy (disciple) of Mūsā (*And when Mūsā said to his boy* — 18:60)*,* Dhu 'l-Qarnayn, 'Imrān (father of Maryam) and 'Uzayr. (The first one is mentioned in the Qur'ān by an adjective and the other by name).

The Qur'ān has not mentioned how many prophets there were all together. The traditions giving their number are not *mutawātir* and differ among themselves. The most well-known is the tradition of Abū Dharr that the prophet told him that there were one hundred and twenty-four thousand prophets; three hundred and thirteen of them were apostles.

The chiefs of all the prophets are the ones endowed with fortitude (*ulu'l-'azm* اولوالعزم); and they are Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, 'Īsā and Muḥammad (blessings of Allāh be on him and them all!) Allāh says: *Therefore bear up patiently as did the apostles endowed with fortitude bear up with patience…* (46:35) It will be explained later on that *'azm* (fortitude, determination, firm resolve, العزم) in this context means that they firmly upheld the first covenant they made with Allāh, and they

[3] This is as it appears in the Arabic orginal, but it is in fact the same prophet as the Ismā'īl appearing earlier in the list.

never forgot it. Allāh says: *And when We made a covenant with the prophets and with you, and with Nūḥ and Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and 'Īsā, son of Maryam, and We took from them a firm covenant*. (33:7). Also He says: *And certainly We had covenanted unto Adam before, but he forgot and We did not find in him any determination.* (20:115).

Each of these five apostles brought a new law and a book. Allāh says: *He has prescribed for you of the religion what He enjoined upon Nūḥ and that which We have revealed unto you, and that which We enjoined upon Ibrāhīm and Mūsā and 'Īsā ...* (42:13); *Most surely this is in the earlier scriptures, the scriptures of Ibrāhīm and Mūsā*. (87:18—19); *Surely We sent down the Torah in which was guidance and light; with it the prophets ... were judging* (matters) … *And We sent after them in their footsteps 'Īsā, son of Maryam, verifying what was before him of the Torah ... And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is before it of the Book and a guardian over it; therefore, judge between them by what Allāh has revealed and do not follow their desires* (to turn away) *from the truth that has come to you; for every one of you did We appoint a law and a way, and if Allāh had pleased He would have made you* (all) *a single people, but that He might try you in what He gave you ...* (5:44—48)

These verses clearly show that these five *ulu 'l-'azm* prophets had been given laws, and that Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, 'Isā and Muḥammad (peace be on them all) were given books. So far as the book of Nūḥ is concerned, we have already explained that the verse under discussion, read together with verse 42:13, proves that he was given a book. All these books contained a law and a *sharī'ah.*

The Qur'ān says that Dawud (a.s.) was given a book (*And We gave Dāwūd the Zabūr* (4:163)), and according to the traditions Ādam, Shīth and Idrīs also were given books. But we are not concerned here with those books, because they did not contain any law or *sharī'ah.*

Revelation is essential for prophethood. Revelation is a sort of talk of Allāh, and prophethood depends upon it. Allāh says: *Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Nūḥ and the prophets after him ...* (4:163). A full discussion of revelation will be given, God willing, in the chapter of *ash-Shūra.*

TRADITIONS

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said: ‘‘The men before Nūḥ, were one people, on the creation of Allāh, neither rightly guided nor gone astray, then Allāh raised the prophets.’’ [*Majma‘u ’l-bayān*]

There is a tradition from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said about this verse: *And it was before Nūḥ*. He was asked whether they were on the right path. He said: ‘‘Rather they were astray. When Ādam and his good children died, his successor, Shīth, was unable to expound the religion of Allāh which was followed by Ādam and his good children. It was so because Qābīl had threatened to kill him as he had killed his brother, Hābīl. Therefore, Shīth lived among them in fear, keeping his religion secret. Their straying increased day by day until nobody remained with them on the earth except those who had already passed away. And the successor (of Ādam) settled in an island to worship Allāh. Then Allāh decided to raise the apostles. And if these ignorant ones were asked they would say that He (Allāh) had finished the matter; but they are liars; verily it is thinga bout which Allāh decrees every year.’’ Then the Imam recited: *Therein every wise affair is made distinct*. (44:4). (Then he said:) ‘‘So Allāh decrees what should happen during the year, hardship or abundance or rain or other such things.’’ The narrator asked whether before the prophet they had gone astray or were on the right path. The Imām said: ‘‘They were not on guidance. They were on the creation of Allāh upon which they were created. There is no change in the creation of Allāh. And they were not to be guided until Allāh guided them. Do you not hear the words of Ibrāhīm, *Had not my Lord guided me, I would certainly have been of the erring people*. (6:77) i.e., forgetful of the covenant.’’ [al ‘Ayyāshī]

The author says: The words, *They were not on guidance. They were on creation of Allāh,* explain the words *they were astray* which have been used in the beginning of the tradition. It means that they were not guided in detail to the divine knowledge, but had its rudimentary knowledge. And such a guidance may be termed straying in the meaning of ignorance of details. The first tradition, quoted from *Majma‘u ’l-bayān,* mentions it in these words: ‘‘on the creation of Allāh, neither rightly guided nor gone astray.’’

The last words of this tradition, ‘‘forgetful of the covenant’’ also

explain the straying mentioned earlier. Guidance is the remembrance of the covenant in its reality (as is the case with the perfect believers), or the carrying on like those who remember the covenant, even if one oneself does not remember it in reality (as is the case of most of the believers); and giving the name of guidance to this second group is only because of the mercy of Allāh.

Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam narrates that an atheist came to Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.), and asked him, ‘‘From whre did you prove the prophets and apostles?’’ The Imām said: ‘‘When we proved that there is a Creator and Maker who is elevated above us and above all the created things, and that that Creator is wise, and that it is not possible for His creatures to see Him or touch Him; and that He cannot live with them nor they with Him, and He cannot have discussion with them nor they argue with Him ; then it is proved that He must have in His creation some envoys to guide the people to their advantage and interest and to that on which depends their existence and the neglect of which brings their destruction. Thus it is proved that there should be some people to enjoin (good) and forbid (evil) on behalf of the (Creator who is) wise and Cognizant of His creation. It all proves that He has his interpreters, and they are the prophets, His chosen ones from among His creation, wise, well-trained in erudition, sent (to the people) with that (wisdom); not like the people in their conditions though they are like them in physique and the make-up of the body; supported by the Wise, the All-knowing with wisdom and proofs and arguments and evidence, like raising up the dead and healing the blind and the leper. So, the earth of Allāh cannot remain empty from a proof (of Allāh) with whom should be a sign to show that he is truthful in his words, and it is essential for him to be on justice.’’ [*at-Tawḥid*]

The author says: Evidently, this tradition contains three proofs about three subjects of prophethood:-

First: A reason to prove the necessity of prophethood in general. On deep consideration you will find it in conformity with what we have inferred from the verse under discussion.

Second: The proof that it is necessary that the prophet be supported with miracles. It conforms with what we said about miracles under the verse (2:23) *And if you are in doubt as to that which We have revealed to Our servant, then produce a chapter like it ...*

Third: The proof that there should always be a representative of Allāh on this earth, be he a prophet or an Imām. And we shall explain this, God willing, in a suitable place.

There is a tradition narrated by ‘Utbah al-Laythī from Abū Dharr (May Allāh have mercy on him) that he said: ‘ ‘I said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! How many prophets were there?’ The Prophet said: ‘One hundred and twenty-four thousand.’ I said: ‘How many of them were apostles?’ He said: ‘Three hundred and thirteen, a large crowd!’ I said: ‘Who was first of the prophets?’ He said: ‘Ādam.’ I said: ‘Was he an apostle from among the prophets?’ He said: ‘Yes. Allāh made him by His hand (power) and breathed into him of His spirit.’ Then the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: ‘O Abū Dharr! Four of the prophets were Syrians: Ādam, Shīth, Ukhnūkh i.e. Idrīs (and he was the first to write with the pen) and Nūḥ; and four of them were Arabs: Hūd, Sāliḥ, Shu‘ayb and your prophet, Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.); and the first prophet among the children of Israel was Mūsā, and the last of them was ‘Īsā and (between them were) six hundred prophets.’ I said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! How many books were sent down by Allāh?’ He said: ‘One hundred and four books. Allāh sent down fifty books unto Shīth, and thirty books unto Idrīs, and twenty books unto Ibrāhīm, and He sent down the Torah, and the Injīl, and that Zabūr, and al-Furqān.’ ’’ [*al-Khiṣāl* and *Ma‘ānī al-akhbār*]

The author says: This tradition, and especially its first part describing the number of the prophets and the apostles, is famous, and it has been narrated by Shī‘ahs and Sunnīs in their books. And aṣ-Ṣadūq has narrated a tradition of the same meaning in *al-Khiṣāl* and *al-Amālī,* from ar-Ridā (a.s.) through his forefathers from the Prophet; and (another tradition) from Zayd ibn ‘Alī through his father and grandfather from ‘Alī (a.s.); and similar traditions have been reported by Ibn Qawlawayh in *Kāmilu ’z-ziyārah* and by as-Sayyid in *al-Iqbāl* from as-Sajjād (a.s.) and in *al-Baṣā’ir* from al-Bāqir (a.s.).

There is a tradition from al-Bāqir (a.s.) about the words of Allāh: *and he was an apostle, a prophet* (19:51), that he said: ‘‘The prophet is the one who sees in his dream and hears the voice but does not see the angel; and the apostle is the one who hears the voice, and does not see in dreams, and sees the angel.’’[*al-Kāfī*]

The author says: There are other traditions with this meaning.

Possibly, their meaning may be inferred from such verses as, *therefore, send Thou to Ḥarūn.* (26:13) This tradition does not say that the apostle means the one to whom the angel of revelation is sent. It simply says that prophethood and apostleship are two ranks, the speciality of the one is seeing in the dream, and of the other is seeing the angel of revelation. Sometimes, both ranks are combined in one person, then the two specialities are found together; and sometimes prophethood is found without apostleship. Therefore, apostleship is more particular than prophethood, in practice, but not in meaning. See for example, the tradition of Abū Dharr, mentioned above, in which he asks, ‘‘how many of the prophets were apostles?’’

Therefore, it is clear that every apostle is a prophet but not *vice versa.* This clear explanation provides the answer to the misunderstanding of some people who say that the Holy Prophet of Islam was not the last apostle, though he was the last prophet. Their ‘‘argument’’ is as follows:

Allāh says: *but he* (i.e. Muḥammad) *is the Apostle of Allāh and the last of the prophets.* (33:40) The verse says that he was the last of the prophets, but does not say that he was the last of the apostles.’’

Reply: Prophethood is, in fact, more general and comprehensive than apostleship. When a general item is negated its particular groups are automatically negated.

And so far as the traditions are concerned they have never said that apostleship can be found without prophethood. As you have seen they clearly say that all apostles were prophets, but not all prophets were apostles.

Abu ’l-Ḥasan ar-Riḍā (a.s.) said: The *ulu ’l-‘azm* prophets were given this name because they were people of firm determination and (brought a new) law. It was like this: Every prophet coming after Nūḥ was on his *sharī‘ah* and his way, and followed his (Nūh’s) book upto the time of Ibrāhīm, the friend (of Allāh). And every prophet from the time of Ibrāhīm was on the *sharī‘ah* of Ibrāhīm and his way and followed his book upto the time of Mūsā. And every prophet from the time of Mūsā was on the *sharī‘ah* of Mūsā and his way and followed his book upto the time of ‘Īsā. And every prophet who was in the time of ‘Īsā and after him, was on the *sharī‘ah* of ‘Īsā and his way and followed his book upto the time of our prophet, Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.). So, these five are *ulu ’l-‘azm,* and they are the best of the prophets

and apostles (peace be on them all). And the *sharī'ah* of Muḥammad will not be abrogated till the Day of Resurrection. Therefore, anyone who makes a claim to prophethood after him or to bringing a book after the Qur'ān, his blood is allowed (i.e. it is allowed to kill him) to anyone who hears this (claim) from him.'' [*'Uyūnu 'l –akhbār*]

The author says: A tradition of similar meaning is reported from aṣ-Ṣadiq (a.s.) in *Qiṣaṣu'l-anbiyā'.*

About the verse: *Therefore, bear up patiently as did the apostles endowed with fortitude bear up with patience,* that the apostles referred to here are Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā and 'Īsā (peace be on them all). And the meaning of ''endowed with fortitude'' is that they were the first of all prophets in believing in Allāh, and they believed in every prophet who was before them or came after them; and they were determined to remain patient even when they were rejected (by their people) and tormented. [*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī]

The author says: It has been narrated by Sunnī chains from Ibn 'Abbās and Qatādah that the prophets endowed with patience were five: Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, 'Īsā and Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.). It is the same as narrated in the traditions of *Ahlu 'l-bayt.* There are other views attributed to some Sunnī scholars. One said that they were six: Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Isḥāq, Ya'qūb, Yūsuf and Ayyūb. Another said that they were the prophets who were given the order to fight in the way of Allāh, and thus waged war. Some one said that they were four: Ibrāhīm, Nūḥ, Hūd, and the fourth was Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.). But all these sayings are without any proof.

There is a tradition narrated by ath-Thumālī from al-Bāqir (a.s.), that he said: ''The prophets between Ādam and Nūḥ were concealed, and that is why they were not mentioned in the Qur'ān nor were they named therein as were named those prophets who declared themselves (before their people).'' [al-'Ayyāshī]

The author says: This meaning has been narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* by numerous chains.

Tafsīr of aṣ-Ṣāfī quotes from *Majma'u 'l-bayān* a tradition of 'Alī (a.s.) that Allāh raised a black prophet whose story He did not reveal to us.

In the first of *Nahju 'l-balāghah,*'Alī (a.s.) says, mentioning Ādam (a.s.):-

''Then (Allāh) sent him down to the place of trial and procreation of

progeny. And from his progeny Allāh chose prophets and took their pledge for (His) revelation and for carrying (His) message as their trust. In the course of time, many people changed the covenant which Allāh had made with them; thus they ignored His right, and took partners along with Him. And Satan turned them away from knowing Him and cut them off from His worship. Then Allāh raised among them His apostles, and sent to them His prophets one after another, to exhort the people to fulfil the covenant of His creation; and to remind them of His bounties which were forgotten; and to argue with them by communicating (to them revelation), and to bring out for them the buried (treasures of) wisdom, and to show the signs of His omnipotence: namely, the roof (i.e. sky) which is raised over them, and the floor (i.e. earth) which is placed beneath them, and the means of livelihood that sustain them, and the deaths that make them die, and the ailments that turn them old, and the happenings that successively betake them. And Allāh never allowed His creation to remain without a prophet sent (by Him), or a book sent down (from Him), or a binding proof, or a laid-down highway — the apostles who were not discouraged by the smallness of their (followers') number or largeness of their rejectors. Among them was a predecessor who was told the name of his follower, or a follower introduced by his predecessor. In this way, ages passed by, and the times rolled on, and the fathers passed away while the sons took their place, till Allāh raised Muḥammad in fulfilment of His promise and to finalize His prophethood.''

The author says: ''In fulfilment of His promise'' refers to the promise made by Allāh to sending His Apostle, Muḥammad; and good tiding of him were brought by 'Īsā and other prophets (peace be on them), as Allāh says: *And the word of your Lord has been accomplished truly and justly* ... (6:115)

There is a tradition narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn al-Walīd from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said: ''Allāh said about Mūsā: *And We wrote for him in the tablets admonition from everything* ... (7:145) So, we know that He did not write for Musa everything (but only a portion 'from everything'). And He said quoting 'Īsā: *so that I may make clear to you part of what you differ in* ... (43:63). And He said to Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.):... *and* (will) *bring you as a witness against these*; *and We revealed the Book to you explaining clearly everything* ... (16:89)'' [al-'Ayyāshī]

The author says: The same meaning has been narrated in *Baṣā'iru 'd-darajāt* from 'Abdullāh ibn al-Walīd by two chains.

The words of the Imām, ''Allāh said about Mūsā…'' point out that the words of Allāh, *in the tablets ... from every thing* explain the immediately following words about the Torah, *and clear explanation of all things.* If Allāh had meant a comprehensive description of every thing, He would not have said, *from everything* which refers only to a portion, not to the whole. This ''from'' shows that the ''explanation of everything'' means only a partial, not a comprehensive, explanation of everything.

PROPHETHOOD: FROM A PHILOSOPHICAL POINT OF VIEW

Prophethood, *per se, is* primarily a theological, not a philosophical, subject. It is concerned with ordained laws which have no independent physical existence; while philosophy is concerned with those things which exist outside the imagination, which have existence independent of the mind of the beholder.

Even then, looking from a different angle, we may say that it is also a philosophical subject.

Religious teachings — its fundamental beliefs and moral and practical laws — have a strong relation with the human soul; they etch on the mind firm knowledge and qualities which, in their turn, create firmly ingrained characteristics and abilities. This knowledge and these characteristics give a distinct identity to the human soul and decide its path, either towards bliss and nearness to Allāh, or towards perdition and distance from Him. Man, if he has true and correct beliefs and acts righteously, acquires those perfections which bring him nearer to Allāh and His pleasure and take him to paradise. On the other hand, if he has wrong beliefs and does evil acts, his soul will acquire an ugly face; he will have no other goal except this transitory world and its trinkets, and, as a result, after departing from this world, he will enter hell and perdition.

This journey of human soul — to paradise or to hell — is not a thing confined into mind; it is a fact and a reality existing independent of Human imagination. Accordingly it becomes a philosophical subject; and we may philosophically prove the institution of prophethood as follows:-

The earlier-mentioned abilities and characteristics of the human soul take him on the road to perfection. Man is a species existing in reality, and he is the cause of many effects which also exist in reality. Experience shows that all existing things have been given the ability to reach their perfection. And Allāh is the absolute Benefactor and there is no limit for His beneficence, so far as He is concerned. Therefore, every soul must have been given what it needs to reach its perfection, and to turn its abilities into accomplishments — the accomplishments which are called bliss if they contain good attributes and virtuous characteristics, and perdition if they take the shape of bad habits and evil characteristics.

These characteristics are acquired by those of man's actions which are done of his own will and choice. That choice is based on his belief that a certain thing is good and another bad. He has been given the instincts of love and fear. He loves what he thinks beneficial for him and fears what, in his thinking, is harmful. Love and fear are the only two instincts from which the actions of comman man emanate. Therefore, the beneficence of Allāh also should make use of these two faculties of man. Allāh should call man to follow the right path and live a virtuous life; and that call should be accompanied by love and fear, good tidings and warnings. In this way, true believers will reach their perfection of bliss and felicity; and unbelievers and the unjust will reach the perfection of misery and unhappiness.

And the call needs a caller to communicate the divine message to human beings. And that caller is the prophet sent by Allāh.

Question: The faculty of reason and wisdom is enough to exhort man to follow the truth in belief and action and to lead him to excellence and piety. So, what is the need of sending the prophets?

Answer: It has been explained earlier that there is a pure and spiritual wisdom which perceives the real nature of things. Also, there is practical wisdom which says, 'this is good' and 'that is bad'. It is this practical wisdom which invites man to follow the truth in belief and action. This wisdom bases its judgement on human feelings and emotions; and in the beginning, the only emotions that exist in man are desire and fear. The faculty of pure spiritual wisdom and intellect, which can control these emotions, remains only a potentiality.

It has been explained at length that it is this desire and fear, this emotion and feeling which lead man to conflict and difference. If man

were left under the control of these emotions, his intellect and other potentialities would never turn into accomplishments. It does not take long for an individual or a nation, when they have been deprived of good training, to return to barbarism and savagery, even though they have the practical wisdom and are governed by natural instincts.

Therefore, there is always need of divine help in the form of prophethood to strengthen the intellect and pure spiritual wisdom.

SOCIOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS ABOUT PROPHETHOOD

Question: It may be accepted that human wisdom cannot act independently in all situations concerning an individual or a nation. But nature always progresses towards its good, and also society, which is based on nature, follows it and moves towards the good of its individual members, and finally acquires an ideal form which ensures the happiness of all its members. This principle is called the effect of the environment. Conflicting faculties and powers, after action and reaction, ultimately create a noble society, befitting human life. History and experience show that all societies are always in search of their perfection; they aspire for the common weal and are progressing towards a felicity and happiness which are the final ambition of every man. Some societies, like Switzerland, have already attained that goal, while others are on the way, and may be nearer to, or farther from, it.

Answer: Nobody can deny that nature always strives to attain perfection and happiness; and that society, which is based on nature, is also like that. But it should be remembered that its desired perfection and bliss is not real perfection and bliss. What nature possesses at the moment are the instincts of love and fear, not intellect. But it is the intellect which is the foundation of real perfection and bliss. Even the evidence offered in the question shows this fact. The perfection and happiness found in some countries and desired by others is only material perfection and the happiness of the body. But man is not body only; he is made of both body and soul. The body's perfection is not man's perfection. The body dies while the spirit lives forever. Perfecting only one side and neglecting the other (and that also the one which is to last forever) is not perfection at all.

Historical and sociological evidence strengthens our view that

society, by trial and error, can only progress towards material perfection and physical happiness if any society wants to lead its members to the perfection of the total being, then it cannot do so without prophetic help and divine guidance.

Question: If it is true that the prophetic call has a connection with divine creative guidance which leads everything to its goal of perfection, then it must have a clear and existing influence on human societies. We see that not only man but everything is naturally guided to the matters of its advantage and benefit without fail. If the prophetic call had been a guidance like that, it would have been influential in all human societies and man would not have been able to ignore it, just as he is unable to ignore other natural calls. But we know that it is not so. So how can it be called a true reformation when it is not accepted by societies? So, the theory that the prophetic mission is necessary to remove the differences in society and life is just a theory which cannot be proved by facts.

Answer: First: (a.) The effects, of the religious call are there for every one to see and appreciate. Only an obstinate contender can deny it. Since its foundation and appearance, it has trained thousands and thousands leading them to bliss, and has condemned several times more to perdition and unhappiness — depending on their acceptance or rejection, submission or arrogance and belief or disbelief. Such an effective thing cannot be said to have had no effect.

(b) Some societies have from time to time been established based on religion, and they have shown what may be achieved by following this path.

(c) This world is still alive; the human species is not yet extinct. It is possible that one of these days human society will turn into a virtuous society founded on religion — a society which will guarantee the true happiness of man, and real excellence of character and morality. It will be a day when none shall be worshipped except Allāh, and justice and virtue shall be the norm of the day. Such a magnificent effect cannot be ignored or belittled.

Second: Sociology, psychology and moral science prove that our actions have a dual relationship with our characteristics: they come into being because of psychological factors, and they in their turn have an influence on psychological factors. The actions are the effects of soul and psyche; and they effect the psyche in its characteristics. It is this principle

which has given birth to two principles the principle that man is influenced in his character and morals by society; and the principle that he inherits many characteristics from his forefathers. In short, these actions increase their scope horizontally through the environment, and continue from generation to generation vertically through heredity.

Now, it is known that the divinely appointed prophetic mission has remained with human societies since the dawn of humanity, not only in historical, but even in pre-historical, days. Nobody can deny that such a mission, such a call, must have deeply effected the man's social characteristics and high morals. This religious call must have influenced man's psyche very deeply, even if he does not believe in that call.

We would be justified in asserting that all the good qualities of present-day nations and societies are the effects of prophethood and religion, which they have acquired through heredity or the environment. Religion, since its inception, has been accepted and followed by many great societies and groups. And do not forget that religion is the only institution which calls man to the true faith, to noble character, justice and common welfare. Whatever good traits are found today in nations (however little they may be) are the residue of the effects of religion and its results.

Societies can be managed in any of three ways - there is no fourth alternative. First is the system of tyranny. It turns human beings into the slaves of the tyrant (or tyrants) in all aspects of their lives. Second is the system based on civil laws. These laws control overt actions only; they do not touch other aspects of the human personality, like character and ethics. Third is religion which controls and rules over the whole being — beliefs, ethics, and actions — and calls to keep all of them on right path, with truth and virtue.

It is clear from the above that if there is any good in this world or any happiness and bliss for man, it must be attributed to religion and its effects, because no other system aspires to give any guidance on these matters.

Look, for further proof, at the nations that have built their societies on materialism and have neglected religion and morality. They soon lost the virtue, love, mercy and purity of heart and forgot all probity and ethical excellence. It all happened while they were following the dictates of nature. Had nature, *per se,* been enough, and had those characteristics

not been a legacy of religion inherited from the ancients, they would not have lost those noble virtues.

History says that the Christians, during and after the Wars of the Crusades, adopted important points of Islamic law and acted upon them. Now they have advanced, while the Muslims, who did not follow their own religion, have been left behind.

To make a long story short, heredity and environment have let the spirit of religion permeate human society, as they do with other things. Therefore, it is wrong to say that religion has had no impact on humanity.

Question: Well then, what is the role of nature in this scheme? It appears from the above that nature is of no use, and that happiness and bliss are in the hands of the prophethood. If that is so, then why should the prophethood claim that the *sharī'ah* is based on nature?

Answer: One has only to refer to what we have written on the relationship of the nature to man's felicity and bliss to realize that this objection is baseless. The happiness and perfection brought by prophethood is not something alien to the human species nor is it separate from man's nature. It is nature which finds its way towards that bliss, but it cannot find it alone without outside help; and that help (i.e. prophethood) also is not something separate from humanity and its perfection. In other words, prophethood is not like a stone put beside a man; otherwise, it would not have meant any credit to the prophet — that stone does not increase the weight of the man. The fact is that prophethood is the perfection of human nature; it is a special perception and a particular conception which is hidden in human nature; but only those few individuals can be led to find it whom the Grace of Allāh has specially chosen for it. An analogy may be given — though it is beneath the dignity of prophethood — to the pleasure of the sexual act which only mature persons can feel; minors can-not know it, even when that instinct which both adults and minors equally share is ingrained in human nature.

In short, neither is the reality of prophethood something extraneous from .the humanity of the man, who is the prophet, nor is the bliss which it brings to people who follow it anything separate from their humanity and nature. Otherwise, it could not be a perfection for the prophet or a bliss for his people.

Question: In that case, the objection is turned against prophethood. What the above explanation says is that nature by itself is enough, and

prophethood is not separate from nature. It appears that the human species is social by nature and has diversity in its unity; that some individuals excel others in all good aspects: their nature is true, their intelligence free from imaginary things and lust, their character purified from undesirable traits. Those highly distinguished persons are guided by their straight-forward character and discriminating wisdom to what contains the good of society and the happiness of man. Then they legislate laws which ensure the common weal and prosperity of this world and the hereafter.

Accordingly, the prophet is a virtuous man who is a social genius.

Answer: Not at all. It is an interpretation which does not fit with the reality of prophethood nor with its accompanying factors:-

First: It is a hypothesis invented by some sociologists who had no knowledge of religious matters and knew nothing about the Creator or the final destination of man. It was their theory that a prophet is a genius who has a straight forward character and healthy, wisdom. Such a genius ponders over the social condition of his time and thinks how his chaotic society may be reformed and how the members of society may find happiness and bliss.

According to this theory, that genius is ‘the prophet’; the good healthy thought which flows from the fountain-head of his thinking power is ‘the revelation’; the laws made by him for the reform of the society are `the religion'; his pure spirit which showers these thoughts on his thinking power, and does not deceive the human world by following lustful desires is ‘the Trustworthy Spirit’ i.e. Jibrīl; the real inspirer of that revelation is ‘God’; the book containing his lofty and pure thoughts is ‘the heavenly book’; the natural powers or factors which call towards good are ‘the angels’; the soul which incites to evil or the powers and factors inviting to bad deeds are ‘Satan’; and so on.

It is a totally invalid theory, and I have mentioned under the subject of ‘miracles’ that prophethood with this meaning would be better called a political toy rather than divine prophethood. Also it has already been explained that this thinking, which they have named genius, is a particular phase of practical wisdom, which distinguishes between good and bad according to its benefit or harm, and is commonly found in all human beings. Also, it has been described that it is that wisdom which is the cause of all the conflicts and differences among human beings; and as such it cannot remove that difference

itself. Surely, it needs another power to complete its work. And we have said just above that that power is a special type of perception which is found, by the Grace of Allāh, only in a few chosen persons who are called prophets.

Obviously, this special spiritual perception is totally different, in its reality, from the perception which comes through thinking. The results to which man reaches through thinking, logic and reasoning are completely unlike those which he perceives through the prophetic faculty. Not only the results, even the ways to obtain those results, are diametrically opposed to each other.

Psychologists are sure that man has an inner source of perception which occasionally manifests itself in some individuals. Then a door is opened before the eyes of this individual and he sees a world beyond this world and is given knowledge of astonishing facts and realities beyond the purview of reason and thinking. This fact is vouched for by all ancient psychologists as well as a group of modern European scholars.

In short the way of prophetic revelation is different from reasoning and thinking. And prophethood cannot be given the meaning invented by these people. The same is the case with the *sharī'ah,* religion, the heavenly Book, the angels, and Satan.

Second: What is recorded of the speech of the prophets who claimed they had received prophethood and revelation, like Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), 'Īsā, Mūsā, Ibrāhīm, Nūḥ and others (peace be on them all), and what is extant from their books (like the Qur'ān) clearly refutes the interpretations which these people have invented for prophethood, revelation, the sending of books, angels and the other realities of religion. The book of Allāh, the traditions of the Holy Prophet of Islam and the sayings of the earlier prophets (peace be on them all) clearly say that these realities and their effects are beyond the sphere of matter and nature, and they are not a part of natural phenomena and cannot be perceived by any of the human senses.

With this background, the interpretation which tries to bring these prophetic realities within the jurisdiction of the physical world and under natural laws is a futile attempt which does not conform to the context and nature of the above meanings and sayings.

It has been mentioned earlier that the factor which removes conflict

in the human society is this inner spiritual perception which is independent of that perception which comes through the agency of thinking.

Question: It would mean that this inner perception is something extraordinary and abnormal. It is not a common experience; only a few persons have ever claimed to have had it. How can such a rare experience lead the whole of society to reform and to the removal of conflict and difference? How can it guide them to their true happiness? You have already said that the factor which will lead the people to bliss and happiness must be related to and connected with, their nature; it should not be some thing extraneous like a stone at the side of a man.

Answer: There is no doubt whatsoever that prophethood is an extraordinary thing; and that it is an inner spiritual perception unknown to the five senses. But reason does not deny that extraordinary and abnormal things and things hidden from our senses do exist in the world. What it denies is the existence of something which is impossible. Reason has its ways to verify whether a thing claimed to be abnormal and hidden from the senses really exists. It can prove its existence through its causes (deduction) or through its effects or its accompanying factors (induction).

Prophethood may be proved by one of two methods. (1) Through its effects — the religion brought by the prophet ensures the happiness of man in this world and in the hereafter. (2) Through its accompanying factors — the claimant of prophethood claims an abnormal thing, that Allāh talks with him through revelation; therefore, if his claim is true he should be able to produce some other abnormal signs, which are called miracles.

Therefore we have these two ways to verify a claim of prophethood, the good quality of the religion brought by the prophet, and miracles.

Question: It may be agreed that the conflicts of society can be removed by this inner perception which is called prophetic revelation. It may also be agreed that the prophet can prove it through miracles, and then it will be obligatory on people to accept and follow the religion promulgated by him. But what is the guarantee that the prophet cannot commit any mistake in the promulgation of the *sharī'ah*? After all, he is a human being like everyone else, and every

one by nature commits mistakes. If an error occurred at this stage of promulgating the law and removing differences, the same process would have to be started again.

Answer: Previous explanations are enough to answer this question. The divine revelation does not come through human thinking, which might commit mistakes. It exists independently of human thought and imagination.

There is a law of creation, decreed by the Creator, that He, after creating a thing, guides it to its perfection. See the verse: *Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it* (to its goal). (20:50) The thing created does exist in reality; it is a fact. There is no mistake or falsehood in a fact. Mistake and falsehood may occur when the man starts the process of his thinking and tries to acquire knowledge. Then what conforms with the fact is called truth and what does not conform is false hood. Thus it is human thought which may be contaminated by lies and falsehood, and not the divine creation, which is a fact, a reality.

Now, the Creator made man and He guides him to his bliss and happiness, to his perfection, through a guidance which is called revelation. That revelation is a thing created by Him; it is a fact and a reality. And no falsehood can be attributed to a fact and a reality. A fact is a fact; a reality is a reality. As this guiding agency is a fact and creation of Allāh, not a result of human thinking, there can never be any mistake or error or falsehood in it. Nor can there be any such possibility in perceiving or communicating that revelation, because this also is done through the creative guidance of Allāh. Neither does the creative power make any mistake in putting that prophetic spirit and spiritual perception (i.e. revelation) in the person of the prophet nor does that agency of divine guidance, i.e. the spiritual conception, make any mistake in discriminating between what is good for the humanity and what is bad for it.

That is why Allāh does not bestow prophethood on anyone without creating in him the faculty of *'iṣmah,* the *'iṣmah* from mistake in receiving and communicating the revelation and *'iṣmah* in all matters connected with religion and promulgation of the *sharī'ah.* This *'iṣmah* is other than *'iṣmah* from sin.

Question: Why is this inner perception not subject to change,

deterioration and feebleness like human reason and thinking. Human thinking power is something other than matter. But, because it has a connection with matter (as it passes through the brain) it is subject to all types of changes. It can be strong or feeble; it may exist or cease to exist completely, as in the case of lunacy; also there are variations in its degree, as in the cases of idiots, the feeble-minded or the mentally-retarded, or in senile people.

Now, this inner perception also has a connection with the body of the prophet, and, as such it may also be subject to changes, deterioration and other defects. In that case all the previously mentioned difficulties would arise afresh.

Answer: We have already said that this guidance of human beings to their true happiness is done, not by human thinking, but by the hands of the Creator who brings that agency of guidance into being; that agency is a truly existing thing, and there is no question of any mistake in an existing thing or 'fact'.

It is not accepted that every perception, having any relation with body, is liable to change and deterioration. What is accepted is that perception based on reason and logic is liable to such change and deterioration; but it is known that this inner perception, i.e. prophetic revelation does not come under this heading. For example, man has a perception of his own person, and this knowledge cannot change, disappear or deteriorate, because it is a self-evident knowledge, not based on reasoning or logic.

Now, we may sum up this long discussion as follows:-

First: Mankind proceeds towards a social life and its differences.

Second: These differences, which cut at the root of the happiness of the species, is not, and cannot be, removed by the laws made by human wisdom which acts through reason and logic and are liable to mistake.

Third: The differences can only be removed by prophetic perception, which is created by Allāh in some chosen human beings.

Fourth: The basis of this inner perception, found in the prophets, is totally different from the basis of human thinking, common to all sane men and women.

Fifth: This inner perception never makes any mistake in perceiving the beliefs and laws which are communicated to it by Allāh for the betterment of the human species in its true happiness.

Sixth: These conclusions (and the last mentioned three are the most important: the essentiality of sending the prophets, the basic difference between the perception of revelation and perception based on reasons, and the *'iṣmah* of the prophet in receiving and communicating the revelation) are in conformity with the general scheme of things in this physical world. Every species in this world is progressing towards its perfection guided by the Creator who gave it the means to progress along the road to final perfection and bliss. Man is one of those species; and he has also been given the faculties by which he can acquire right beliefs and noble virtues., and can do good acts in a good and noble society. Therefore, it is necessary that the Creator should make arrangement to bring that potential bliss into real existence; that He should guide him with His creative guidance which is free from mistake or error.

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ
مَتَى نَصْرُ اللَّهِ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ - ٢١٤.

Or do you think that you would enter the Garden while yet the like of those who have passed away before you has not come upon you; distress and affliction befell them and they were shaken violently, so that the apostle and those who believed with him said: *When will the help of Allāh come*? *Now, surely the help of Allāh is nigh!* (2:214)

COMMENTARY

It has already been mentioned that these verses (from 2:208 to 2:214) are in one context and related to each other.

Qur'ān: *Or do you think that you would enter the Garden:* It concludes what was described in the previous verse: Religion is a guidance from Allāh to lead mankind to what contains their prosperity and happiness in this world and the hereafter; and it is a grace of Allāh bestowed upon them. Therefore, it is essential for them to submit themselves to this religion, without following in the footsteps of Satan. They should not create differences in it and should not turn the medicine itself into a disease; they should not change the bounty of Allāh into disbelief and ingratitude, by following their lust and desire, and seeking the trinkets of this world and its decorations. If they do so, they will incur the wrath of Allāh, as happened in the case of the Israelites when they perverted the bounty of Allāh given to them. They must remember that the trial is continuing and the test is in progress. They also will be tested as the previous people were put to test; and no one will get the bliss of religion and nearness to Allāh, the Lord of the worlds, except through fortitude and complete submission to His commands.

The first two verses were addressed directly to the believers, then the style was changed, treating them in the third person, finally in this verse they are again addressed in the second person, treating them as present. The fact is that the whole talk is with them and they are the real audience. But the style was changed in the middle verses for some good reasons

(for example, those verses contained the topics of chastisement and punishment.) When the purpose was served, once again a direct address was resumed.

The word *am* (or, أم) gives here the meaning of ‘‘but’’. It is made for ‘‘or’’, but the context of the verses gives it the following meaning: Do you intend to devote yourselves solely to what I have told you — to submit to Me, to believe in Me and to remain steadfast on the right path of religion, maintaining unity and cooperation — Or do you not; but think that you would enter the Garden ...

Qur’ān: *while yet the like of those who have passed away before you has not come to you. mathal* (المثل) and *mithl* (المثل) are used for that likeness which creates a picture of the thing for which it is used in the mind of the hearer.

Mathal (adage, المثل) is generally used for a saying or story which brings to mind the intended meaning in the shape of an illustrative metaphor, as Allāh says: *The similitude* [*mathal,* المثل] *of those who were placed under the Torah then they did not hold it, is as the similitude of the donkey bearing books* ... (62:5) Also, *mathal* (المثل) is used in the meaning of adjectives, as Allāh says: *See how they coin comparisons* [*amthāl*, الأمثال] *for you* ... (25:9) They were using for him (s.a.w.a.) adjectives like insane, bewitching, lying, etc.

In this verse, the word *mathal* (المثل) is used in the first meaning, because the similitude is explained in the words, *distress and affliction befell them* ...

Qur’ān: *distress and affliction befell them and they were shaken violently*:

When a short reference was made to ‘‘the like of those who have passed away before you’’, the audience became anxious to know what had befallen them. Then Allāh described it in detail in these words, *distress and affliction befell them* ...

Distress (*ba’sā’*, الباساء) is that hardship which befalls a man outside his person, like to property, prestige, family or in the general law and order of the society. Affliction (*ḍarr’,* الضّرّاء) means that hardship which befalls him in his person, like a wound, murder, sickness, etc. *Zalzalah* (الزّلزلة) and *zilzāl* (الزّلزال) means an earthquake. Its root is *zalla* (زلّ) which means ‘slipped up’, ‘stumbled’. The root word is repeated in this verb to imply repeated stumbling and slipping up. Anyhow the word is

metaphorically used for being agitated and disturbed, and that is why we have translated it ‘‘were shaken violently’’.

Qur’ān: *so that the apostle and those who believe with him said. When will the help of Allāh come?*

Apparently it was the saying of the apostle and the believers together. There can be no objection as to why the apostle should utter such words. He might have exclaimed so to seek the help of Allāh which He had promised in these verses: *And certainly Our word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the apostles, most surely they shall be the assisted ones.* (37:171—172) Also He said, *Allāh has written down*: *I will most certainly prevail, I and my apostles.* (58:21)

Allāh says: *Until when the apostles despaired and deemed they were indeed told a lie, Our help came to them ...* (12:110) We may see that the tone of this verse is far harsher than the verse under discussion.

Qur’ān: *Now, surely the help of Allāh is nigh* : Apparently this is Allāh’s answer to the call of the apostle and the believers.

It has already been mentioned that the verse proves that the test and trial of the people will continue in this nation also as it did for the previous ones. Also, it shows that if the same actions and attitudes appear again, the same consequences will follow. It is true in the religion also, as historians say that the history repeats itself.

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ . قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ـ ٢١٥.

They ask you as to what they should spend. Say: *Whatever of good you spend, it is for the parents, and the near of kin, and the orphans, and the poor, and the wayfarer*; *and whatever of good you do Allāh surely knows it*. (2:215)

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *They ask you as to what they should spend. Say*: *Whatever of good you spend ...* The scholars say that the style of this verse is one of philosophy. The questioners had asked about what they should spend. But that question was foolish, because one does not need divine revelation to know that what is spent is wealth in all its various shapes. Rather, they should have asked: Whom the wealth should be spent for. Therefore, Allāh mentioned, instead, the deserving beneficiaries, which the questioners should have asked in the first place.

It is good reasoning; but those scholars have left out one important point. Even though the verse did not reply to their question directly, it has touched on it, and has hinted at the reply in two places: *Whatever of good you spend* and *whatever of good you do.* The verse, therefore, shows that the thing to be spent is wealth, irrespective of its shape and quantity; and that spending it on worthy beneficiaries is a good deed and Allāh knows it very well; then it makes them aware that they should rather have asked the names of the beneficiaries, and guides them in this respect by giving the list: the parents, the near relatives, the orphans, the poor and the way-farer.

One finds in the commentaries of the Qur'ān some strange explanations of this verse:-

One of them says: ''what'' (*mā,* ما) in *what they should spend* was not used by the questioners to enquire about the quiddity and essence of the thing which should be spent, because it is from the terminology of logic, and is not worthy of any literary speech of eloquent style, let alone the Qur'ān which is the purest of the Arabic literature. Rather the

word ‘‘what’’ was used for ‘‘how’’; they wanted to know how they should spend their wealth and on whom. Accordingly, the verse answered that question. The reply, therefore, is according to the question, and the reasoning of the scholars of eloquence (given earlier) is out of place.

Someone else went a step further. He said: It is true that ‘‘what’’ is used to ask about the essence; even then , the questioners’ aim was to ask as to ‘‘how’’ they should spend. It was known that ‘‘what’’ is spent is wealth. As this was well-known, there was no risk of their being misunderstood; the hearer was bound to understand that they wanted to ask about ‘‘how’’. It is like the verse: *they said*: *‘‘Call on your Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what she is, f o r surely to us all the cows are alike ... ’’* (2:70) They knew that the cow is an animal having such shape and such characteristics. Therefore, the words *what she is* could not be taken to mean that they wanted to know its quiddity — its genus and species. The only possible meaning, thus, was that they wanted to know the particulars of that cow so that they might distinguish it from the others. That is why they were given the reply, *He* (Mūsā) *said*: *‘‘He* (Allāh) *says, surely she is a cow not made submissive that she should plough the land ...’’* (2:71)

Both the commentators seem confused. It is true that *mā* (what, ما) is not used in language to ask about the quiddity of a thing, according to the terminology of logic — for a definition made up of the nearest genus and species. But it does not mean that it is made for the question about ‘‘how’’. It would be a linguistic mistake for the one who wants to ask, ‘‘for whom should I spend?’’ to say ‘‘what should I spend?’’

Mā (what, ما) is made so as to ask for the factors which might distinguish one thing from others. The reply may be given by a logical definition using the nearest genus and species, or by describing such other distinctive characteristics and qualities by which that thing may easily be recognised. The word ‘‘what’’ is, therefore, general and includes the logical term, but is not different from it. And certainly it is not made to ask ‘‘how’’. The question about the cow and its reply (2:70—71) was asked and given correctly according to the language. There was no deviation in either from the real meaning of ‘‘what’’ — the question was about distinguishing factors of a thing.

A third one said: As the quiddity and essence was well-known, there

was no alternative but to divert the word ‘‘what’’ to mean ‘‘how’’.

It is a manifest error. That the answer is well-known, is no justification for changing the meaning of a word to mean something quite different.

There is one more strange explanation: The questioners had asked both questions — what should they spend, and where. The Qur’ān mentioned only the first question and omitted the second, because the reply pointed to it. What nonsense!

Now, we come back to the verse. There is no doubt that there is here a diversion, in the main reply, from the asked question, to remind the people that the question worthy of asking was ‘‘where’’, not ‘‘what’’, they should spend, because it was no secret that spending is done from wealth and riches.

We find in the Qur’ān that it often diverts its speech from one meaning to another, to point out that the new topic is more worthy of attention. It is a style of beauty which is difficult to find in other books. See for example:

And the parable of those who disbelieve is the parable of one who shouts to that which hears not but a call and a cry ... (2:17)

(Here the parable has been diverted to a satire against the idols.)

The likeness of what they spend in the life of this world is as the likeness of a wind in which is intense cold, (that) *smote upon the tillage of a people who had done injustice to their souls, and destroyed it.* (3:117)

(The parable is diverted from the wealth spent to its ultimate forfeiture.)

The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allāh is as the parable of a grain growing seven ears, in every ear there are a hundred grains; *and Allāh multiplies for whom He pleases*; *...* (2:261)

(The parable is diverted from those who spend in the way of Allāh to the manifold increase in its reward.)

The day on which neither property will avail nor sons, except him who comes to Allāh with a heart free (from evil). (26:88—89)

(Instead of praising the heart, free from evil, the believer is praised who has got that heart, to show the importance of the believer.)

Say: *I do not ask you aught of recompense for it, except that he*

who will, may take the way to his Lord. (25:57)

Glory be to Allāh (for freedom) *from what they describe, except the servants of Allāh, the purified ones.* (37:159—160) There are many such verses.

Qur'ān: *and whatever of good you do, Allāh surely knows it.*: The word spending has been changed here to ''doing good''; likewise, in the beginning of the verse ''wealth'' was changed to ''good'' (''whatever of good you spend'').

This change guides us to two principles:

First: It is very much recommended that one should spend one's wealth on the recognised beneficiaries — it does not matter whether the amount is small or large. But what matters is that the thing spent should be ''good'', desirable and likeable. Allāh says: *Never shall you attain to righteousness until you spend* (benevolently) *out of what you love* (3:91); *0 you who believe! Spend* (benevolently) *out of the good things that you have earned and what We have brought forth for you out of the earth; and do not aim at what is bad that you may spend of it* (in charity) *while you would not take it yourselves unless you connive at it ...* (2:267)

Second: The spending should not be in a bad manner. The spending should be without reminding the receiver reproachfully of it or injuring his feelings. Allāh says: *... then do not follow up what they have spent with obligation* (reproach) *or injury ...*(2:262); *And they ask you as to what they should spend. Say: Whatever can be spared ...* (2:219)

TRADITIONS

There is a saying of Ibn 'Abbās that he said: ''I did not see any people better than the companions of Muḥammad. They did not ask him except thirteen questions till he was taken away (from this world), all of those (questions) are in the Qur'ān. Among them are: 'They ask you about the intoxicants and games of chance'; 'They ask you about the sacred month'; 'They ask you about the orphans'; 'They ask you about the menses'; 'They ask you about the booty'; 'They ask you as to what they should spend'. They never asked but what was of (practical) to them.'' [*ad-Durru'l-manthūr*]

It is written in *Majma'u 'l-bayān* that this verse was revealed about

'Amr ibn al-Jamūḥ; he was a very old man of great wealth. He said: ' ' O Messenger of Allāh! What should I give in charity and to whom?'' Then Allāh revealed this verse.

The author says: This tradition has also been narrated in *ad-Durru'l-manthūr* through Ibn al-Mundhir from Ibn Ḥayyān. But the scholars have said that this tradition is weak. Apart from the weakness in the chain of narrators, it is not in conformity with the verse, because the verse mentions only one question as to what should be spent, and not on whom.

Similarly, two other traditions reported in that book do not conform with the verse. The first is narrated through Ibn Jarīr and Ibn al-Mundhir from Ibn Jarīḥ that he said: ''The believers asked the Messenger of Allāh (s.a.w.a.) where they should put (i.e. spend) their wealth. So, the verse was revealed: *They ask you as to what they should spend. Say*: *'Whatever of good you spend ... '* This, then, is voluntary (non-obligatory) expenditure; and *zakāt is* different from all of it.''

The second one is narrated from as-Suddī that he said: The day when this verse was revealed, there was no *zakāt.* It is (about) the spending what one does on one's family and the alms one gives away. Then (the law of) *zakāt* abrogated it.

The author says: It is clear that the relation between the verse of *zakāt* (*Take alms out of their wealth* — 9:103) and this verse is not of abrogation at all. Or does the word ''abrogation'' mean something else in their language?

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئاً وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ
لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئاً وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ وَاللهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لاَ تَعْلَمُونَ - ٢١٦.
يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ وَصَدٌّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ
اللهِ وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِنْدَ اللهِ وَالْفِتْنَةُ
أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلاَ يَزَالُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّى يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَنْ دِينِكُمْ إِنِ
اسْتَطَاعُوا وَمَنْ يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَيَمُتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ
أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ - ٢١٧.
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ أُولَئِكَ يَرْجُونَ
رَحْمَةَ اللهِ وَاللهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ - ٢١٨.

Fighting has been prescribed for you, and it is (an object of) *dislike to you; and it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you; and Allāh knows, while you do not know.* (216) *They ask you concerning the sacred month about fighting in it. Say*: *Fighting in it is a grave matter; and hindering* (men) *from Allāh's way and denying it, and* (hindering men from) *the Sacred Mosque and turning its people out of it are still graver with Allāh, and the mischief is graver than the killing; and they will go on fighting with you so that they may turn you back from your religion if they can; and whoever of you turns back from his religion, then dies while an unbeliever - these it is whose deeds are forfeited in this world and the hereafter; and they are the inmates of the fire; therein shall they abide.* (217) *Surely those who believed and those who fled* (their home) *and strove hard in the way of Allāh, these hope for the mercy of Allāh; and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.* (218)

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *Fighting has been prescribed for you, and it is* (an object of) *dislike to you*: It has repeatedly been explained that *kitābah*

(writing, الكتابة), which has been translated here as prescription, means an obligatory command, if used in the matter of legislation, and a firm decree, if used in the matter of creation. This verse, therefore, shows that fighting in the way of Allāh is compulsory for all believers (as the verse is addressed to them) except those who are exempted by other verses or traditions. For example: *There is no blame* (in staying behind) *on the weak, nor on the sick, nor on those who do not find what they should spend, so long as they are sincere to Allāh and His Apostle ... nor on those who when they came to you that you might carry them, you said: I cannot find that on which to carry you ...* (9:91—92)

The verb, *kutiba* (has been written, اكتب) is in the passive voice, because it is followed by the phrase, *and it is* (an object of) *dislike to you.* It was not proper to mention clearly the name of the writer (i.e. Allāh) of a writing which was to be an object of dislike to the believers. By not using the active voice, the verse protected the sanctity of the divine name and removed every chance of slight to it.

Kurh (dislike, ألكره) is the hardship felt by man in his self, naturally or otherwise. *Karh* (compulsion, ألكره) is the hardship forced upon him by extraneous agencies as when he is forced to do a work which he does not like to do. Allāh says: ... *it is not lawful for you that you should take women as heritage against* (their) *will* ... (4:19); ... *so He said to it and to the earth: Come both, willingly or unwillingly* ... (4:11)

Why was the ordained fighting to be an object of dislike to the believers? Three explanations have been given for it:-

1) Fighting entails loss of limbs and lives, economic hard ship, monetary loss and the deterioration of law and order; goods necessary for life disappear from the market and become scarce; and many other things crop up in society which man dislikes by nature. Allāh has praised the believers in His book and said that a group of them were sincere in their faith and successful in their endeavours. But, at the same time, He has admonished another group of them because of their shaky belief and crooked thinking, as may be seen in the verses revealed about the battles of Badr, Uḥud and Khandaq etc. The people addressed by this verse were, therefore, of two types: One, steadfast in their faith, who could not dislike any command of Allāh; the other, those who might dislike them, and this second group was more numerous. Therefore, it was quite in order to describe such a mixed group as disliking an order, especially when

those disliking it were in the majority.

2) The believers were aware that the unbelievers were well-prepared for fighting and had more strength and material support than the Muslims. They, therefore, thought that fighting at that particular time would not be in the interests of the Muslims; hence, the order to fight should be delayed for some other suitable time. This postponement would give them time to increase their manpower, war-material and martial strength. Allāh told them in this verse that they were mistaken in this view, because Allāh in this affair has a purpose which shall surely be attained; He knows the hidden reality of everything while their knowledge is confined only to the apparent facts.

3) The believers were well-trained by the Qur'ān, and, accordingly, they felt clemency towards the creatures of Allāh, and mercy and pity had become second nature to them. They did not like fighting with the unbelievers, as it meant that a number of their adversaries would die in disbelief, and the believers were not pleased about that. They would have liked to deal with those adversaries with good humour, and live with them with nobleness and gentleness, inviting them to Islam with good exhortation, hoping that they would come to the right path. They thought that in this way, they would protect themselves from death, and the unbelievers from dying in disbelief and entering into eternal fire.

Allāh, in this verse, made it clear that this thought of theirs was not correct. Allāh, Who ordained the fighting knew very well that the call of truth would have no effect on those misguided souls who were spiritually a total failure. The true religion could not expect any good from them either in this world or in the next. They were in humanity like a totally degenerated limb which will certainly infect other organs if not removed from the body by a surgical operation.

These are the explanations given for the words of Allāh, *and it is* (an object of) *dislike to you.* But the first one is the most appropriate, especially if we look at the verses admonishing a group of believers (referred to in the explanation) and keep in view the passive voice of the verb, *has been written on you,* i.e., has been prescribed for you.

Qur'ān: *and it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you*: It has already been explained that the words like ''may be'' and ''perhaps'', when used in divine speech, mean ''it is hoped''. This hope is related not to the speaker (Allāh) but to the hearers. In other words,

when Allāh says: *may be it is so* it does not mean that He hopes it will be so (Elevated be He from such uncertainties!); rather it means that the hearers should hope or expect it in this way.

The repetition of ‘‘may be’’ in this sentence and the following one (*and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you*) means that the believers disliked fighting and loved peace; so Allāh told them that they were mistaken in both. If the sentence is framed without repeating the word ‘‘may be’’ (i.e. ‘and it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you or love a thing while it is evil for you’) it will convey the idea that ‘‘your dislike and love have no significance, because such feelings are often misplaced.’’ Such a sentence is addressed to the one who .has erred in something, for example, if one dislikes meeting a certain person. But if he has erred in two things — e.g., he dislikes mixing with the people and loves seclusion — then the norms of elocution demand that he should be warned against both tendencies, e.g. ‘you are neither justified in your dislike, nor are you right in your love; it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing and it is evil for you; because you do not know the unseen, and, therefore, you cannot find your way towards the hidden realities of any thing.’ As the believers, in addition to their dislike of fighting, also loved peace and ease (as is implied in the previous verse: *or do you think that you would enter the Garden while yet the like of those who passed away before you has not come upon you*). Allāh pointed to both mistakes in two separate sentences: *it may be that you dislike* ... and *it may be that you lave* ...

Qur’ān: *and Allāh knows while you do not know*: This is the final step in making their mistake known to them. Allāh has gradually made them realise that they were in manifest error. To begin with, He told them that it was possible that they were mistaken in their dislike of the fighting (*it may be that you dislike* ...). Their minds accepted the implication of those two sentences; and thus they were freed from their compound ignorance, as now they felt doubtful about the correctness of their views. When that stage was reached, Allāh told them clearly that the order which you dislike, is ordained by Him who is not unaware of the hidden realities of the things, while your views are based on your psyche which knows only that much which it has been allowed by Allāh to know. Therefore, it is incumbent upon you to leave all such decisions into His

hand.

The verse proves that knowledge, in its reality and totality, is Allāh's only; and others have no knowledge of their own at all. This reality is explained in many other verses: *Allāh, surely nothing is hidden from Him ...* (3:5), *and they cannot comprehend anything out of His knowledge except what He pleases...* (2:255). And some explanation about fighting has been given in the verse 2:190, *And fight in the way of Allāh...*

Qur'ān: *They ask you concerning the sacred month about fighting in it:* The verse contains the prohibition of fighting in the sacred month. Then it goes on to say that disbelief and turning the people of the Sacred Mosque out of it are far graver sins and that the mischief is graver than the killing. These sentences show that there must have occurred some incident which prompted the believers to ask the question, and that there was some killing in that incident, but that killing was not intentional. (See the last verse: *Surely those who believed ... these hope for the mercy of Allāh.*)All these pointers confirm what has been described in the traditions that some believers had killed an unbeliever unknowingly in the sacred month in a battle, and that the unbelievers had ridiculed the Muslims for it. The incident was that of 'Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh and his companions.

Qur'ān: *Say, fighting, in it is a grave matter; and hindering* (men) *from Allāh's way and denying it and* (hindering men from) *the Sacred Mosque ...*: ''Allāh's way'' means worship and virtuous actions and especially the pilgrimage (*ḥajj*). Apparently the pronoun ''it'' in ''denying it'' refers to ''Allāh's way''; thus it would mean denial in practice, not in faith. And ''the Sacred Mosque'' is in conjunction with ''Allāh's way'', and means 'hindering from Allāh's way and the Sacred Mosque'.

The verse clearly shows that fighting in the sacred month is forbidden.

It has been said that this verse was abrogated by the verse: *then slay the idolaters wherever you find them* (9:5) But this view is not correct, and some explanation about it have been given in the commentary of the verses of fighting.

Qur'ān: *and turning its people out of it are still graver with Allāh, and the mischief is graver than the killing:* What the idolators

had done — turning the Apostle of Allāh and the believers out of the Sacred Mosque (and they were truly the people of the Sacred Mosque) — is far graver than fighting. And the mischief done by them in rebuking the believers and calling them back to disbelief is graver than killing. Therefore, they have no right to reprove the believers for killing when they themselves had committed far graver sins. So far as the believers are concerned, they still hope for the mercy of Allāh, and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.

Qur'ān : *and they will go on fighting with you so that they may turn you back ...* : *ḥatta* (حتّى) means ''till''; but here it signifies cause or purpose. That is why it has been translated here as ''so that''.

Qur'ān: *and whoever of you turns back ... these it is whose dees are forfeited ... and they are inmates of fire*: It threatens apostates with the forfeiture of their deeds and an eternal abode in the Fire.

FORFEITURE OF DEEDS

Forfeiture (*ḥabṭ,* الحبط) means nullification of a deed and invalidity of its effects. Whenever this word is used in the Qur'ān, it is always related to deeds; for example, *Surely, if you associate* (others with Allāh), *your deed will certainly be forfeit and you will certainly be of the losers*. (39:65) *Surely those who disbelieve and turn away from Allāh's way and oppose the Apostle, after that guidance has become clear to them, cannot harm Allāh in any way, and He shall make null their deeds. O you who believe! Obey Allāh and obey the, Apostle, and do not make your deeds of no effect.* (47:32—33) If we compare the last phrases of both verses, we shall see that the nullifying of the deeds is the same as the deeds being of no effect. This meaning is more clearly seen in the verse: *and what they wrought in it shall be forfeit, and vain* (null and void) *is what they do.* (11:16) And nearer to it is the word of Allāh, *And We will proceed to what they have done of deeds, so We shall render them as scattered floating dust.* (25:23)

In short, *ḥabṭ* (.الحبط) of deeds means their coming to nothing and their being of no effect. It has been said that it is derived from *ḥabaṭa* (حبط) which is used when an animal over-eats and its stomach distends, often resulting in its death.

The effect of forfeiture (*ḥabṭ,* الحبط) as described by Allāh, is

nullification of the deed in both worlds, here as well as in the hereafter. Forfeiture has a connection with the deeds and it affects the life hereafter. The faith beautifies this world's life as well as it makes the life hereafter a pleasant one. Allāh says: *Whoever does good, whether male or female, and he is a believer, We will most certainly make him live a happy life, and We shall most certainly give them their reward for the best of what they did*.(16:97) Also it is clear, without any shadow of doubt, that the endeavours of the unbeliever are lost and his deeds are of no effect in this world; and it is especially true in the case of the man who turns back towards infidelity, leaving the true faith. His heart cuts itself away from its anchor in this stormy life — the anchor being belief in the One and only God. He has nowhere to turn — where he can express his joyful thanks when blessed with a bounty, find solace when confronted with a misfortune, and to whom he can pray when in need of something. Allāh says: *Is he who was dead then We raised him to life and made for him a light by which he walks among the people, like him whose likeness is that of one in utter darkness whence he cannot come forth*? (6:123) This verse shows that the believer has in this world a good life and a light in his actions which the disbeliever does not possess. Also Allāh says: … *then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy. And whoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall surely be a straitened life, and We will raise him, on the day of resurrection, blind.* (20:124) This verse also proves that the life of the unbeliever in this world is a straitened one, full of difficulties, and that a believer's life, in contrast, is a blessed, happy and pleasant one.

All this explanation, together with the cause of both groups' happiness and unhappiness respectively, is given in this short verse: *That is because Allāh is the Master of those who believe, and because the unbelievers have no master for them.* (47:11)

It appears from the above details that deeds (*a'māl,* الأعمال) here means all the actions done by a man so as to attain happiness in life. The meaning of ''deeds'' in this context is not confined to the apostate's acts of worship and other virtuous deeds done by him when he was a Muslim. Moreover, the forfeiture of deeds has been mentioned even in connection with those who do not perform any act of worship, for example, disbelievers and hypocrites. It clearly proves that it is not only acts of worship which are forfeited. See, for example, the verses: *O you who*

believe! If you help (the cause of) *Allāh He will help you and make firm your feet. And* (as for) *those who disbelieve, for them is destruction, and He has let their deeds go astray. That is because they disliked what Allāh revealed, so He rendered their deeds null* (47:7—9); *Surely* (as for) *those who disbelieve in the signs of Allāh and slay the prophets unjustly and slay those among men who enjoin justice, announce to them a painful chastisement. Those are they whose deeds shall become null in this world, as well as the hereafter, and they shall have no helpers.* (3:21—22) There are many verses like these.

The gist of the verse under discussion, like other verses of forfeiture, is that disbelief and apostasy make the deeds ineffective, i.e., such deeds lose their power to make life blissful. On the other hand, true faith and belief give life to the deeds and they create felicity, bliss and happiness in life. If someone acquires true faith after disbelief, his deeds are given a new life and they become effective in making life blessed and happy (although they were forfeit and ineffective before). Likewise, if he apostatizes after having been a believer, all his deeds become dead, null and void; they cannot make life in this world or in the here after happy. Thereafter, if he leaves his apostasy and comes back to the fold of Islam, it is hoped that his deeds will be revived; but if he dies in the apostasy, the forfeiture will have been confirmed and misery and unhappiness will be written down for him.

This explanation is enough to show that the controversy about the forfeiture of the deeds of an apostate — whether it is effected at the time of apostasy or at his death — is baseless. That controversy is as follows:-

Some people say that those deeds of an apostate which were done before his apostasy remain preserved until his death, and that if he does not return to the true faith before his death, they will become forfeit on his death. Their argument is based on this very verse which is under discussion: *and whoever of you turns back from his religion, then dies while an unbeliever — these it is whose deeds are forfeited in this world and the hereafter ...* They also bring in their support the verse: *On the day when they shall see the angels ... And We will proceed to what they have done of deeds, so we shall render them as scattered floating dust.* (25:22—23) This verse describes the condition of unbelievers at the time of death ; and it implies that if the apostate had returned to the true belief, those deeds which he had done before apostasy would have remained valid.

Others say that apostasy nullifies deeds completely; and they do not

return to him even if he comes back to the true belief. Of course, the deeds done after his return to the true belief do belong to him. According to them, the verse contains the words, ‘‘then dies while an unbeliever’’ because it purports to show the condition of all his actions done during his life in this world.

But the explanation given by us shows that there is no ground here at all for any such controversy. The verse in fact conveys the meaning that all his actions and deeds become ineffective in the meaning that they cannot bring any bliss, felicity or happiness in his life.

There are two other questions here, somewhat related with the above one: The first is the theory of *iḥbāṭ* (الاحباط.). It is the theory that good and evil deeds cancel each other.

Some people said that actions cancel and invalidate each other. These people are further divided in two groups: One says that every subsequent evil deed cancels the preceeding good one, and vice versa. It means that at any given time a man has in his account either good only or evil only. The other group says that there is a system of counterbalancing good and evil deeds; the weight of the lighter side is deducted from the weightier side, the balance remaining on account. This theory, like the previous one, means that at the end there remains in the man’s account only good or only evil actions — if any balance is left after the said counter balancing.

Both these views are wrong, because:-

First: Allāh says in the Qur’ān; *And others have confessed their faults, they have mingled a good deed and an evil one, maybe Allāh will turn to them* (mercifully); *surely Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.* (9:102) This verse clearly says that there are some good deeds and some evil ones, and that they will remain written in the account of the doer in their original form until the mercy of Allāh decides about them. This cuts away the roots of the theory of cancellation with all its interpretations.

Second: Allāh uses the same system of reward and punishment that is used by reasonable men in this world — rewarding the good deed and punishing the evil one, each separate from the other. Of course, if one commits a sin that cuts away the relationship between Master and servant (e.g. disbelief or idolatory), then all his deeds become forfeit. There are numerous verses to prove it; and there is no need to quote them here.

The second related question is the theory of *takfīr* (التّكفير).*Takfīr* (التّكفير) is the belief that the actions do not cancel each other; every

action is preserved — a good action has its own effect and an evil one its own. But, as clearly mentioned in the Qur'ān, a good deed sometimes atones for, and removes, an evil one. Allāh says: *O you who believe! If you fear Allāh, He will grant you a distinction and remove from you your evil ...* (8:29); *then whoever hastens off in two days, there is no sin on him, and whoever tarries* (there) *there is no sin on him* (2:203); *If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your* (small) *sins …* (4:31).

Not only this, but some good deeds change an evil action into a good one, as Allāh says: *Except him who repents and believes and does a good deed; so these are they of whom Allāh changes the evil deeds to good ones; and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.* (25:70)

There is another matter which is like the basis of all these questions: When and where does the doer become entitled to recompense? Some have said: it is the time of the action. Others have said: the time of death. Still others have said: the hereafter. And a fourth group has said: it is the time of the action but only if the doer continues in the same condition upto his death.

Every group offers various verses of the Qur'ān in support of its view, and some add some rational argument too.

Let us say that reward and punishment, forfeiture and atonement are the effects of the deeds themselves (as we have explained in our commentary of verse 2:26). It follows that the human soul, as long as it is connected with the body, is subject to changes in its qualities. When man does something good, there appears in his soul a spiritual quality which entitles it to receive the reward; and when he commits a sin, the spiritual quality appearing in his soul entitles it to receive chastisement. As man in this world is subject to change from one condition to other, (because he continues to mingle good deeds with evil ones), his present spiritual quality may possibly be changed to its opposite as a result of his subsequent deeds. This goes on till death overtakes him. The soul departs from the body, actions stop, changes cease, potentialities come to an end, and qualities acquired upto that time are firmly established in his soul in a way that it no longer accepts any change or alteration (except through the mercy of Allāh or intercession by His chosen servants).

Or let us say, as we have said earlier, that Allāh uses the same system of recompense as is used by reasonable men in this world. It means that

obedience or disobedience to divine laws and their recompense follows the same method which is seen in social laws. Reasonable people praise and commend the law-abiding and obedient man as soon as he does something good, and condemn a disobedient man as soon as he does something wrong. But, at the same time, they know that the said commendation or condemnation may be changed in the future, because the man concerned may alter his ways. In short, the praise or condemnation is offered at once, but its continuation depends on the man's continuing in the same way in the future. But an ever-lasting praise or ever-lasting condemnation, not subject to any further change, will attach to him when there is no longer any possibility of change in his quality, i.e. by death or by the loss of potentiality.

These explanations are enough to show that all the above mentioned views on this subject have, in one way or the other, deviated from the truth, because they have based their discourse on wrong premises.

The truth is as follows:-

First: A man becomes entitled to reward or punishment as soon as he does whatever he does; but that reward or punishment is still subject to change or alteration. It is only on death that it is confirmed without any possibility of alteration, as we have described above.

Second: The same is the case with the forfeiture of deeds as a result of disbelief, etc. The deeds become forfeited as soon as the man disbelieves, etc. But the forfeiture is confirmed at death.

Third: Forfeiture applies not only to the deeds related to the hereafter, but to those connected with this world also.

Fourth: *Iḥbāṭ* (الاحباط) i.e., the theory of good and evil deeds cancelling each other is wrong. But *takfīr* (التّكفير) is correct — the belief that good actions sometimes expiate evil ones.

AN ESSAY ON THE RULES GOVERNING ACTIONS

A) About Their Reward and Punishment:

There are various rules about the actions of man and their recompense, which are enumerated here:-

1) There are some sins which cause the forfeiture of good deeds in this world and the hereafter. One is apostasy. Allāh says in the verse under discussion: *and whoever of you turns back from his religion then*

dies while an unbeliever, these it is whose deeds are forfeited in this world and the hereafter.

Other such sin is disbelief in the signs of Allāh and enmity towards them. Allāh says: *Surely* (as for) *those who disbelieve in the signs of Allāh and slay the prophets unjustly and slay those among men who enjoin justice, announce to them a painful chastisement. Those are they whose works shall become null in this world as well as the hereafter ...* (3:20—21)

Likewise, there are some acts of obedience, like (submission to) Islam and repentance, that expiate the evil deeds of this world as well as the hereafter; Allāh says: *Say*: *O My servants! Who have acted extravagantly against their own souls, do not des pair of the mercy of Allāh*; *Surely Allāh forgives the faults* (sins) *altogether*; *surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. And return to your Lord* (repent before Him) *and submit to Him before there comes to you the punishment, then you shall not be helped. And follow the best that has been revealed to you from your Lord ...* (39:53—55). *Also,* he says:… *then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy. And whoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall surely be a straitened life, and We will raise him, on the day of resurrection, blind.* (20:123—124)

2) There are some sins which cause the forfeiture of some of good deeds. Such, for example, is opposition to the Prophet. Allāh says: *Surely those who disbelieve and turn away from Allāh's way and oppose the Apostle after that guidance has become clear to them, cannot harm Allāh in any way, and He shall make null their deeds. O you who believe! Obey Allāh and obey the Apostle, and do not make your deeds of no effect* (null and void). (47:32—33)

A comparison between the two sentences implies that the order of ‘‘obedience’’ of the Apostle is the same as the prohibition of his opposition, and *ibṭāl* (nullification of the deed, الابطال) is its forfeiture.

Another such sin is raising one's voice above the voice of the Prophet. Allāh says: *O you who believe! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, and do not speak loud to him as you speak loud to one another, lest your deeds become null while you do not perceive.* (49:2)

Likewise, there are some acts of obedience which expiate and atone some sins. Such are the obligatory prayers, *ḥajj* and the avoidance of

great sins. Allāh says:

About prayer: *And establish prayer in the two ends of the day and at the approaches of the night*; *surely good deeds take away the evil deeds; this is reminder to the mindful.* (11:114)

About *ḥajj*: *then whoever hastens off in two days, there is no sin on him, and whoever tarries* (there), *there is no sin on him.* (2:203)

About avoidance of great sins: *If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your* (small) *sins ...* (4:31)

Those who avoid the great sins and the indecencies except small sins (or just passing thoughts); *surely your Lord is liberal in forgiving.* (53:32)

3) There are some sins which transfer the good deeds from their doer to someone else. Murder is one of those sins. Allāh says: *Verily I intend that you bear my sin and* (also) *your sin ...* (5:29)

Other such sins, according to the traditions of the Prophet and the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* are backbiting and calumny, and others.

There are, likewise, some acts of obedience which transfer the evil deeds from the doer to someone else, as will be explained later.

4) There are some sins which transfer to the doer evil deeds similar to those committed by another person. Allāh says: *That they may bear their own burdens entirely on the day of resurrection and also of the burdens of those whom they lead astray without knowledge.* (16:25)

And most certainly they shall carry their own burdens, and other burdens with their own burdens. (29:13)

In the same way, some acts of obedience transfer to the doer good deeds similar to those done by another person. Allāh says: *and We write down what they have sent before and their foot prints ...* (36:12)

5) Some sins cause double punishment. Allāh says: *In that case We would certainly have made you to taste a double* (punishment) *in this life and a double* (punishment) *after death ...* (17:75);*….the punishment shall be increased to her doubly* (33:30)

On the other hand, there are some good deeds which bring double reward or even more. Allāh says about spending in the way of Allāh: *The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allāh is as parable of a grain growing seven ears, in every ear there are a hundred grain; and Allāh multiplies for whom He pleases.* (2:261). Also He

says; *These shall be granted their reward twice* (28:54); *He will give you two portions of His mercy, and make for you a light with which you will walk, and forgive you.* (57:28)

Moreover all good deeds get their rewards multiplied manifold, as Allāh says: *Whoever brings a good deed, he shall have ten like it...* (6:161)

6) Some good actions change the evil deeds into good ones. Allāh says: *Except him who repents and believes and does a good deed; so these are they of whom Allāh changes the evil deeds to good ones ...* (25:70)

7) There are some good deeds whose like is given to other than the doer (without the doer losing it or its reward). Allāh says: *And* (as for) *those who believe and their offspring follow them in faith, We will unite with them their offspring and We will not diminish to them aught of their work ...* (52:21)

The same may happen about some evil deeds. For example, if one oppresses orphans it brings the same type of oppression on his own children after his death. Allāh says: *And let those fear who, should they leave behind them weakly offspring, would fear on their account ...* (4:9)

8) Some good deeds transfer the evil deeds of the doer (let us call him Zayd) to another person (Bakr), and the good deeds of Bakr to Zayd. Likewise, some evil deeds transfer the good deeds of the doer, Zayd, to Bakr, and the evil deeds of Bakr to Zayd.

This is a surprising factor in reward and recompense, and we shall explain it in detail under verse 8:37: *So that Allāh may separate the impure from the pure, and put the impure, some of it upon the other, and pile it up together, then cast it into hell ...*

There are many traditions explaining the situations where the above-mentioned changes and exchanges may occur, and we shall quote them in the commentaries of these verses, God willing.

If we ponder on the various verses quoted above, we shall see that the system of the recompense of actions (their effectiveness in bringing about happiness and unhappiness) is entirely different from the system of their physical effect. For example, eating is a work which by various actions and reactions affects the eater and satisfies his hunger, but that satiation is not carried on to someone else, nor is it

transferred from the eater to another person. Also, the object of the said eating is the food eaten; the eating changes the food stage by stage into various forms. But that eating cannot affect other food, nor can that food be changed or exchanged with other eaters, nor can the nature of the food be changed to something else. In the same way, if Zayd beats ‘Umar, the action is beating, not something else; the beater is Zayd, not someone else; and the beaten one is ‘Umar, not another person.

But when it comes to the effectiveness of the same actions in happiness or unhappiness, the system completely changes. Allāh says:*... and they did not do Us any harm but they did harm their own souls ...* (2:57); *... and the evil plan does not beset any save the authors of it*. (35:43); *See how they lied against their own souls ...* (6:24); *Then shall it be said to them*: *Where is that which you used to set up besides Allāh*? *They shall say*: *They are gone away from us, nay, we used not to call upon anything before. Thus does Allāh confound the unbelievers.* (40:73—74)

In short, in the world of ‘‘recompense’’, one action is sometimes changed to another, sometimes transferred to someone other than the doer, sometimes given an opposite effect. In other words, the system of recompense is quite different from physical causes and effects.

Question: In that case, there will be no place for reason in the world of actions and their effects, and the rule of wisdom will come to an end; nothing will remain in its real form.

Answer: It is not correct to say that reason and wisdom have no place in this scheme. Allāh and His angels, as He has described in His Book, do offer intellectual arguments against the sinners at the time of death and in Barzakh; and they will offer the same type of proofs against them on the day of resurrection and in Paradise and Hell. Allāh says: *And the trumpet shall be blown, so all those that are in the heavens and all those that are in the earth shall swoon, except such as Allāh please; then it shall be blown again, then Lo! they shall stand up awaiting. And the earth shall beam with the light of its Lord, and the Book shall be laid down, and the prophets and the witnesses shall be brought up, and judgement shall be given between them with justice, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. And every soul shall be paid back fully what it has done, and He knows best what they do.* (39:68-70).

The Qur'ān repeatedly says that Allāh shall decide on the day of resurrection between the people with justice in that which they differed in. For example, it narrates the argument which Satan will put forth on that day: *And Satan shall say after the affair is decided*: *Surely Allāh promised you the promise of truth, and I gave you promises then failed to keep them to you*; *and I had no authority over you, except that I called you and you obeyed me; therefore do not blame me but blame yourselves*: *I cannot be your aider (now) nor can you be my aiders*; *surely I disbelieved in your associating me with Allāh before*; *surely it is the unjust that shall have the painful punishment.* (14:22)

All such verses clearly show that rational arguments and proofs are not, and shall not be, abolished in the world of recompense, although that place is entirely different from this physical world.

Question: But how, then, to reconcile the two claims: that the world of recompense has its own system of reward and punishment, totally different from this world, and that reason also rules in that world?

Answer: The fact is that Allāh has talked with people, in guiding them, in their own language, and has used the expressions of social wisdom while addressing them, and has based His speech on the principles and rules of mastership and servitude. He calls Himself Master, the men are His slaves, the prophets are His messengers to them, He continuously maintains contact with them through commands and prohibitions, prophetic missions and admonishments, good tidings and warnings, promises and threats, and all related matters like punishment and forgiveness, and so forth.

This is the style of the Qur'ān when it talks with mankind. But it has made it clear that the real affair is far above human thinking and imagination. People cannot understand it, nor can their limited intellects comprehend it. That is why it has been brought down to the level of their mental power and clothed in a language which they can understand. In this way, it has been made possible for them to know as much of the sublime truth as was necessary for their happiness and bliss. Allāh says: (I swear) *by the book that makes manifest* (the truth): *surely We made it an Arabic Qur'ān so that you may understand. And surely it is in the original of the Book with Us, truly elevated, full of wisdom.* (43:2—4)

It is for this reason that the Qur'ān has based its description of the

rules of recompense, and all related matters, on the fundamentals of social laws which are known to reasonable men and which are based on social good and evil.

It is really wonderful how those sublime realities, which are so much higher than the level of the common human intellect, can still be explained in terms of that very intellect. For example, practical social wisdom does not reject the idea of giving a harder punishment to a wrong-doer by holding him responsible for all the social evil resulting from his misdeed. Thus, a murderer may be held responsible for the loss of all social benefits and rights resulting from the death of the slain person. And a person starting an evil custom may be punished for the like misdeeds of his followers. In the first example, it may be decreed that the wrongs done apparently by the slain person, were done by the murderer; and in the second example, it may be decided that the like of the misdeeds done by the followers were also done by the initiator of that misdeed, while the followers are not free from the blame in any way — thus the deeds of the followers are the deeds of the initiator as well, and both shall be punished for them.

Similarly, there are situations in which it may be decreed that the doer of an action was not its doer, or that a particular action is in reality some other action, or that the good deeds of someone else belong to this man, or that this man shall have the like of the good deeds done by the other.

The Qur'ān offers reasons for all such changes and exchanges in the world of recompense and explains them in terms of the social laws found in human society, bringing these sublime realities down to the level of the human mind, although the system of that world is totally different from this physical one, and although our social laws have a limited scope and are not valid beyond this life. It is only on the day of resurrection that those hidden realities will manifest themselves before the eyes of man. Allāh says: *And certainly We have brought them a book which We have explained with knowledge, a guidance and a mercy for the people who believe. Do they wait for aught but its final interpretation? On the day when its final interpretation comes about, those who neglected it before will say: Indeed the apostle of our Lord had brought the truth* …(7:52—53) *Also,* He says: *And this Qur'ān is not such as could be forged by those besides Allāh, but is a verification of that which is*

before it and a clear explanation of the book ... Nay, they rejected that of which they have no comprehensive knowledge, and its final interpretation has not yet come to them ... (10:37—39)

Question: These verses, describing such a strange system of recompense, are in conflict with other verses which say that everyone will be responsible for his own action. See for example the following verses:-

So, he who has done an atom's weight of good shall see it. And he who has done an atom's weight of evil shall see it. (99:78)

... and no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another ... (6:164)

...every man is responsible for what he has wrought.(52:21)

And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for. (53:39)

Surely Allāh does not do any injustice to men, but men do injustice to themselves. (10:44)

There are numerous such verses, and they are diametrically opposed to the earlier-mentioned verses about this system of recompense.

Answer: Not at all. The earlier mentioned verses have decreed that the misdeeds done by a man who was slain unjustly were actually done by the unjust murderer. Now if the murderer is punished for those misdeeds, he is punished not for the deeds of the other person, but for those done by himself. Similarly, they have decided that if a man follows another in a sinful act, that action was not done by the follower alone; it is the work of the follower as well as the leader. Thus, there are two sins here, one of the follower and another of the leader. And the leader will be punished, not for the sin of the follower, but for his own. In the same way, those verses have judged that if someone aids an oppressor in his oppression or follows a leader on the wrong path, then the said helper or follower is a partner in those misdeeds; and whatever wrong is done by that oppressor or leader, the said helper or follower is its doer to the same degree.

Thus, these people and others like them are literally and completely governed by the verses quoted in the question, such as ‘‘no bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another’’. Such cases are not outside the sphere of such verses; they are not in conflict with them, nor are they as an exception from the rule.

The same fact is hinted at in the verse,...*and judgement shall be given between them with justice, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly. And every soul shall be paid back fully what it has done, and He knows best what they do.* (39:69—70) The sentence, *He knows best what they do* shows, or hints at, the fact that this paying back fully what every soul has done will be done according to the knowledge of Allāh, and according to His, not their, reckoning.

The sinners have no knowledge and no wisdom. Allāh has deprived them of reason in this world, as He narrates the confession of the people of the Fire: *And they shall say: Had we but listened or pondered* (or, understood), *we would not have been among the inmates of the burring fire.* (67:10). The same will be the case in the hereafter, as Allāh says: *And whoever is blind in this* (world), *he shall also be blind in the hereafter, and more erring from the way.* (17:72); also He says, *It is the fire kindled by Allāh, which rises above the hearts.* (104:6—7). This deprivation is confirmed in the verse:... *until when they have all come up with one another into it, the last of them shall say with regard to the foremost of them: Our Lord! these led us astray, therefore, give them a double chastisement of the fire. He will say*: *Every one shall have double but you do not know*. (7:38) This verse proves that both the leaders and the followers shall be given double punishment — the leaders, because they went astray and misled others into error; and the followers, because they went astray and kept the path of error open by walking in it. Then the verse says that they do not know.

Question: These verses, which say that the sinners are deprived of knowledge in this world as well as in the hereafter, contradict other verses which say that they do possess knowledge. For example, Allāh says: *A book of which the verses are made plain, an Arabic Qur'ān for people who know.* (41:3) Add to it the verses which offer arguments against them: how can one argue with someone who has no knowledge and cannot understand reasoning. Moreover, these verses themselves contain a sort of argument against them in the hereafter. All these things compel us to believe that sinners will possess knowledge and reason in the hereafter.

Apart from this, there are some verses which specifically say that they will possess knowledge and certainty in the hereafter. For example: *Certainly you were heedless of it, but now We have*

removed from you your veil, so your sight today is sharp (50:22); *And could you but see when the guilty shall hang down their heads before their Lord! Our Lord! We saw and we heard, therefore send us back, so that we may do good*; *surely* (now) *we are certain.* (32:12)

Answer: When it is said that sinners have no knowledge in this world, it means that they do not act according to their knowledge. And when it is said that they shall have no knowledge in the hereafter, it means that they cannot escape from the effects of the foolish acts which they have done in this world, and that foolishness will continue to torment them in the hereafter. For example: *And We have made every man's actions to cling to his neck, and We will bring forth to him on the resurrection day a book which he will find wide open* (17:13); *Until when he comes to Us, he says* (to Satan): 0 *would that between me and thee there were the distance of the east and the west* ... (43:38). There are many verses which support this interpretation, and we shall explain this matter fully in the commentary of the verse 2:242: *Then Allāh makes clear to you His signs so that you may under stand.*

Imām al-Ghazālī has explained the matter of the transfer of deeds in a different way in one of his books. The gist of his discourse is as follows:-

''The exchange and transfer of good and evil deeds because of injustice and sin is affected in this world as soon as that injustice and sin occurs; but it will be known (only) on the day of resurrection. Then the oppressor will find his good deeds in the accounts of the oppressed. But that transfer had already been effected in this life. Then Allāh will say on that day, *To whom belongs the kingdom this day*? *To Allāh, the One, the Subduer* (of all). (40:16) Thus Allāh will declare in the hereafter that the kingdom belongs to Him. But that kingdom will not come to Him on that day; it is His always and will remain His forever, although this reality will not manifest itself to His creatures before the day of resurrection. And what a man does not know is for him non-existant, even if in reality it exists; when he comes to know of it, it is as though it came into existence just then.

''Some people say that ''action'' is an immaterial, incorporeal thing. It is not a substance which could be transferred from one person to another in

this life. And it is equally impossible to transfer it in the hereafter; because after death the action ceases to exist, and a non-existent thing cannot be brought back to existence. Therefore, it is difficult to see how a good or evil deed can be transferred from one person to another, either in this life or in the hereafter.

‘‘But this objection is not correct. When we say that a good deed is transferred, we mean that its reward is transferred. Just as the acts of obedience are done to obtain their reward, so the transfer of the reward, i.e. the effect, was metaphorically mentioned as the transfer of the cause, i.e. the good deed itself. That reward or effect is not something separate from the human soul; it is a quality ingrained in it. When the soul is brought back in the body, it will return with all its qualities, including the effects of good or evil deeds.

‘‘When a man does a good deed, i.e. an act of obedience, a light appears in his heart. In the same way a sin or misdeed causes darkness to appear therein. The light of obedience connects the heart with the sublime world of divine light, knowledge and perception. On the contrary, misdeed and oppression remove the heart away from that world. The effects of good and evil actions are opposed to each other; each tries to weaken or eradicate the other. Allāh has said: *Surely good deeds take away the evil deeds.* (11:114) The Prophet has said: ‘If you commit any evil deed, follow it up with a good deed, so that it may eradicate it.’ Every ill or hurt removes the effects of some sins. That is why the Prophet has said: ‘Verily, man is rewarded even for a thorn which pricks his foot.’ Also he said: ‘The punishments are atonements.’

‘‘When an oppressor oppresses someone, his action creates in his own heart a darkness and hardness which cause the eradication of the effects of the light (that had appeared in his heart because of the previously-done good deeds). And his victim feels pain and hurt, and thereby his lust and base feelings are weakened and it causes the obliteration from his heart of the effects of the evil deeds done previously. Darkness gives way to light.

‘‘In this way the light which was in the heart of the oppressor is transferred to the heart of the oppressed; and the darkness in the heart of the oppressed goes to the heart of the oppressor. This is the meaning of the transfer or exchange of the good and evil deeds.

‘‘It can be said that it is not the real transfer. What it actually

means is that the light of the oppressor's heart is extinguished, and a new light is created in the heart of his victim. And the darkness of his victim's heart is removed and a new darkness is created in the heart of the oppressor. And it is not the real interchange.

''The above observation is correct, but the use of this word is still justified. We say: 'The shadow moved from here to there', or 'The light of the sun or of the lamp moved from the floor to the wall'. Such sentences are quite in order, as they are based on metaphor. And there is a double metaphor in our saying that good deeds are transferred from one man to another. First, the reward of the good deed is called a good deed, using the name of the cause for its effect; then the eradication of a feature at one place and the creation of its like at other place is called the exchange or transfer of the feature. Such figures of speech are common in every language and it could be proved by logical proofs. The evidence from the Qur'ān and traditions is in addition to that.''

This was the gist of the views expressed by Imām al-Ghazālī. As he himself has said, his explanation reduces this belief to a double metaphor, or a metaphor in metaphor. If we were to extend this interpretation, then all the rules mentioned in this essary would become metaphors. We have written earlier that Allāh has based the system of recompense on social practical wisdom. And there is no doubt that reason treats these laws as a reality, not as a metaphor. Therefore, the system of recompense should also be treated as a reality, not as a metaphor.

This is true so far as this world of practical wisdom is concerned. Of course, if one were to look at the spiritual world, then this whole material world would be seen to be just a metaphor. But here the discussion is not in that context.

Now, we return to the details about deeds:-

B) Actions preserved, written and embodied:

Deeds are preserved and written; and assume the form of a body. Allāh has said:

> *On the day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good, and what it has done of evil, it shall wish that between it and that* (evil) *there were a long duration ...* (3:30)

And We have made every man's actions to cling to his neck, and We will bring forth to him on the resurrection day a book which he will find wide open. (17:13)

... and We write down what they have sent before and their footprints, and We have fully recorded everything in a clear writing. (36:12)

Certainly you were heedless of it, but now We have removed from you your evil, so your sight today is sharp. (50:22)

This subject has already been discussed in the first volume.

C) Relation between actions and. ''natural'' phenomena:

There is a relation between actions and happenings outside. By ''actions'' we do not mean here physical movements; what we mean is good and evil deeds. Allāh says:

And whatever affliction befalls you, it is on account of what your hands have wrought, and (yet) *He pardons most* (of your faults). (42:30)

Surely Allāh does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition; *and when Allāh intends evil to a people, there is no averting it*. (13:11)

This is because Allāh was never to change a favour which He has conferred upon a people until they change their own condition ... (8:53)

These verses clearly show that there is a relation between our actions and the happenings around us, whether good or bad.

This matter is concisely put in two Qur'ānic verses:

And if the people of the town had believed and guarded (against evil), *We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth*; *but they rejected, so We overtook them for what they had earned*. (7:96)

Mischief has appeared in the land and the sea on account of what the hands of men have wrought, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, so that they may return. (30:41)

Obviously, natural phenomena are somehow related to human deeds. If humanity remains obedient to the commandments of Allāh and walks on His chosen path, happiness and goodness follow and the

doors of bliss are opened. On the other hand if he strays from the path of obedience and continues in his error, mischief and bad faith, chaos appears in the land and on the sea, nations are destroyed because of the injustice prevalent in them, the state of law and order deteriorates, conflict and war become the norm of the day; in short, happiness becomes a scarce commodity and unhappiness reigns in the land. Not only this; natural calamities and disasters appear, like flood, earthquakes, lightening, cyclones, etc. Allāh has mentioned the deluge of the dam of Ma'ārib, the flood of Nūḥ, the lightening of Thamūd and the gale of 'Ād as some examples of phenomenon.

When a wicked nation is submerged in depravity, vice and evil, Allāh makes it taste the bad consequences of its misdeeds, and this leads to its decline, fall and destruction. Allāh says:

> *Have they not travelled in the earth and seen how was the end of those who were before them? Mightier than these were they in strength and in fortifications in the land, but Allāh destroyed them for their sins; and there was not for them any defender against Allāh*. (40:21)
>
> *And when We wish to destroy a town, We send our Commandment to the people of it who lead easy lives*; *thus the word proves true against it, so We destroy it with utter destruction*. (17:16)
>
> *Then We sent Our apostles one after another; whenever there came to a people their apostles, they called him a liar; so We made some of them follow others and We made them stories*; *so away with a people who do not believe*. (23:44)

So this is the story of evil people. Diametrically opposed to it is the story of good and virtuous nations.

Individuals, like groups and nations, are taken over by the effects of their good and evil deeds, by calamities and misfortunes. In addition to this, an individual is sometimes blessed with the blessings given to his forefathers, and is also sometimes overtaken by the results of his ancestors' misdeeds and oppression. Allāh quotes Ya'qūb (a.s.) as saying to Yūsuf (a.s.): *And thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of sayings and make His favour complete to you and to the children of Ya'qūb as He made it complete before to your fathers, Ibrāhīm and Isḥāq* ... (12:6) The favours mentioned in this verse refer to

the kingdom, honour, etc. which Allāh gave to Yūsuf.

Thus We made the earth to swallow up him and his abode… (28:81)

….and We assigned to him a lofty tongue of truthfulness. (19:50)

Probably this ''lofty tongue of truthfulness'' means good and righteous offspring, as Allāh says in another place; *And He made it a word to continue in his posterity ...* (43:28)

And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city, and there was beneath it a treasure belonging to them, and their father was a righteous man; *so your Lord desired that they should attain their maturity and take out their treasure ...* (18:82)

And let those fear who, should they leave behind weakly offspring, would fear on their account ... (4:9) It hints that the offspring may be overtaken by the effects of the injustice of their forefathers.

When Allāh bestows a bounty on a nation (or an individual), and that nation (or individual) is righteous, then that bounty is a blessing — and at the same time a trial to test its (or his) faith. Allāh says about Sulaymān (a.s.) that: *he said: This is of the grace of my Lord that He may try me whether I am grateful or ungrateful; and whoever is grateful, he is grateful only for his own self, and whoever is ungrateful, then surely my Lord is Self-sufficient, Honoured.* (27:40) Again Allāh says: *If you are grateful, I would certainly give you more, and if you are ungrateful*, *My chastisement is truly severe.* (14:7) These two verses prove that thank fullness to Allāh is in itself a good deed which brings about the blessings of Allāh.

If that blessed nation (or individual) is unrighteous and wicked then that blessing is a devise of Allāh to lead it step by step to its ruin, or a respite given to it to complete the proof of Allāh against it. Allāh says: *… and they devise plans and Allāh too arranges a plan; and Allāh is the best of planners*. (8:30). *We will lead them on by steps from whence they perceive not; and yet I respite them; surely My plan is firm.* (68:44-45); *And certainly we tried before them the people of Pharaoh…* (44:17)

And if misfortune comes to a nation (or individual), and trouble and travail plague them, and they are righteous people, then that affliction is a test and trial by which Allāh separates his good servants from the evil ones. They come out of that suffering more purified, like gold when it is

melted in the fire. Allāh says: *Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, We believe, and not be tried? And certainly We tried those before them, so Allāh will certainly know those who are true and He will certainly know the liars. Or do they who work evil think that they will escape Us? Evil is it that they judge*! (29:2—4); *... and We bring these days to men by turns, and that Allāh may know those who believe and take witness from among you ...* (3:140)

And if the people undergoing hardship are wicked, then that hardship is the chastisement of their misdeeds and a sign of the wrath of Allāh. Earlier-mentioned verses are enough to show this aspect.

So this is the story of actions which happen in the world and ultimately returns to their doer.

It is necessary to mention here that the following verse has no connection with the subject under discussion:-

> *And were it not that all people would have been of one way of life, We would certainly have assigned to those who disbelieve in the Beneficent God* (to make) *of silver the roofs of their houses and the stairs by which they ascend, and the doors of their houses and the couches on which they recline; and* (other) *embellishments of gold*; *and all this is naught but provision of this world's life, and the hereafter is with your Lord only for those who guard* (against evil). (43:33—35)

The purpose of this verse is to condemn this world and its paraphernalia, and to show that it has no value or importance in the eyes of Allāh, and that is why He bestows it even on the disbelievers. And had it not been misleading to the people, He would have reserved all the ease and comfort of this world for the disbelievers.

Question: Calamities, whether common to all or particular to a group or an individual, like floods, earthquakes, epidemics, wars, famines, and so on occur because of their well-known physical or natural causes. When the causes appear, the results follow; and makes no difference whether the nation or individual is good or wicked. Therefore, there is no reason to say that such phenomena occur because of good or evil deeds. Such a claim is just a theory invented by religion which is not supported by facts or experience.

Answer: We will discuss this philosophical question in detail in the commentary of the verse 7:96, *And if the people of the towns had*

believed and guarded (against evil), *We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth.*

But a short reply is appended below:-

This objection arises because the meaning of the discourse of the Qur'ān is not understood properly. When the people of the Qur'ān say that *good or bad actions bring out similar good or bad happenings in the world.,* they do not mean that there are no natural or physical causes for those happenings, or that those causes have lost their effectiveness in such incidents. Also, they do not say that those good or evil deeds are, together with natural causes, joint causes of those happenings. For example, when we say that there is a Creator for this world, we do not mean to negate the system of cause and effect which is found in the universe, nor do we say that these causes are partners with Allāh in the creation of the world. What we say is that there is a cause over and above all other apparent causes. Likewise, when we say that good or evil actions result in good or evil incidents in the world, .we do not deny the effectiveness of natural causes; we only mean that there is a higher and more powerful cause, i.e. the good or evil deeds of human beings which serves as the motive power of the natural causes. When a man writes, it is the pen which draws the letters on the paper; but the pen moves not on its own account but by the movement of the hand; and a man with open eyes will not stop even there — he will see the person who moves his hand. When he says that that person writes, he does not negate the effect and force of the hand or the pen; but he knows who the real writer is.

Experience and observation have shown that creation has given every species the means to avert damage or deterioration. Why should homo sapiens alone be an exception to this rule? Also every species is confronted by one or more opposing forces to sharpen its own defensive powers, and in this way it continues from strength to strength till it reaches its perfection. Why should man not be provided with this means of reaching the height of his perfection?

Allāh says: *And We did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them in sport. We did not create them both but with the truth, but most of them do not know*. (44:38—39); *And We did not create the heaven and the earth and what is between them in vain*; *that is the opinion of those who disbelieve* ... (38:27) If a

maker makes anything without any purpose just in sport, there remains no further relation between him and the thing made; he does not care what happens to that thing. But if he makes it for a purpose, he looks after it; if any snag appears in its proper functioning, he mends and repairs it by adding or subtracting something or by dismantling and re-assembling it. The same is the case with the creation of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, including human beings. Allāh did not create all these in vain or in sport; He created them with a purpose and they have to return to Him, as He has said: *What! Did you then think that We had created you in vain and that you shall not be returned to Us?* (23:115); *And that to your Lord is the end goal.* (53:42).

With this background, it is exceedingly clear that God's Providence should be concerned with leading mankind to the goal of its perfection, first by calling them to come to the right path and guiding them to it; then through test and trial; and finally by destroying those about whom there is no hope at all that they may attain the goal of their creation. It is only in this way that the creative goal of individuals and the whole of the species can be achieved; and damaged, nay, damaging parts can be discarded and thrown into perdition, giving relief and respite to the other parts. Allāh says: *And your Lord is the Self-sufficient One, the Lord of mercy*; *if He pleases, He may take you off, and make whom He pleases successors of you, even as he raised you up from the seed of another people*. (6:133)

(Ponder upon the place and significance of the sentence, *And your Lord is the Self-sufficient One, the Lord of mercy.)*

To make a long story short, this divine system of trial and retribution is, as declared by Allāh, an insuperable, invincible and irresistible force which no one can control or subdue. Allāh says: *And whatever affliction befalls you it is on account of what your hands have wrought, and* (yet) *He pardons most* (of your faults). *And you cannot escape in the earth, and you shall not have a guardian or a helper besides Allāh*. (42:30—31) Also He says: *And certainly Our word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the apostles. Most surely they shall be the assisted ones, and most surely Our host alone shall be the victorious ones.* (37:171-173).

D) Actions with reference to happiness and misery:

Those actions causing happiness will always be victorious over those causing misery. Every good quality belongs to actions causing happiness: victory, steadfastness, stability, peace, hope, eternity, etc. Its opposite factors, destruction, nullity, shakiness, fear, decline and defeat, belong to actions causing misery.

There are numerous Qur'ānic verses declaring the above fact. See, for example, the following parable: *Have you not seen how Allāh sets forth a parable of a good word* (being) *like a good tree, whose root is firmly fixed and whose branches are in heaven, yielding its fruit on every moment by the permission of its Lord? And Allāh sets forth parables for men that they may reflect. And the parable of an evil word is as an evil tree pulled up from the earth's surface; it has no stability. Allāh confirms those who believe with the sure word in this world's life and in the hereafter, and Allāh lets the unjust go astray, and Allāh does what He pleases*. (14:24—27) Also Allāh says: *That He may manifest the truth of what was true and show the falsehood of what was false, even though the guilty ones disliked* (8:8); *... and the* (good) *end is for guarding* (against evil) (20:132); *And certainly Our word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the apostles. Most surely they shall be the assisted ones, and most surely Our host alone shall be the victorious ones* (37:171—173);*...and Allāh is predominant over His affair, but most people do not know*. (12:21) There are other similar verses.

The last words of the last-mentioned verse, *but most people do not know,* show that this predominance and victory is not as people think, because most of them are unaware of this victory. Had it been material victory which could be perceived by everyone, the majority would not have remained ignorant of it. This ignorance and unawareness results from two factors:-

First: The thinking power of man is limited; his eyes see only those things which are near to him; he talks about the present and is unaware of what the future has in store. His kingdom is of this day, and his predominance is of this moment. He measures the whole of existence according to the scale of his short span of life and its small possessions. But Allāh is the Master of time and space and the Ruler of this world as

well as the hereafter. He has power and authority over everything. When He judges, He separates the right from the wrong; when He decrees, it is done with truth. This world and the hereafter are but one in His sight; He is not afraid that anything will escape away from His authority. He, therefore, makes no haste in any affair. It is possible (rather, it is a fact) that He may decree a single day's disturbance to establish peace and order for a long time; or the tragedy of one individual as a means of happiness for the whole nation. Now the ignorant man thinks that Allāh was helpless and could not remove that disturbance or tragedy. (How evil is what he thinks!) But, the fact is that Allāh sees the whole chain of time even as He sees a single link of it; He judges about His whole creation as He judges about a single person. One affair does not make him oblivious of another affair; and the preservation of both does not tire Him; and He is the High, the Great. Allāh says: *Let it not deceive you that those who disbelieve go to and fro in the cities* (fearlessly). *A brief enjoyment! Then their abode is hell, and evil is the resting place!* (3:195—196)

Second: A spiritual victory is not the same as a material one. A material victory and predominance means that the victor controls the actions of the vanauished, by depriving them of their freedom of choice, and by ompelling them to do what they do not like. It is enough to look at colonial and imperial powers: at how they gave themselves licence to kill and enslave the weaker people and how they ruled on them as it suited their whim and fancy. But experience shows that tyranny and compulsion cannot last long; and, that therefore, a colonial authority cannot rule over its colonies forever — it is but a passing show.

A spiritual victory, on the other hand, depends on capturing hearts and minds; it trains people who believe in the cause and are ready to sacrifice themselves to make the cause succeed. There is no grade above perfect faith, and no fortress stronger than belief. When one believes in a cause it is bound to manifest itself one day, even if, for the present, it remains hidden from the public eye. It is for this reason that the great powers and living societies put such a great emphasis on the dissemination of their views throughout the world. Sometimes, they spend more time and energy on such propaganda than on arms and ammunition. It is because they know that faith in a cause is more powerful than guns and tanks. If this is correct about these illusionary

causes of politics, it must be far more correct about the eternal truth to which Allāh invites the mankind.

Nothing stands in opposition to truth, per se, except falsehood. And what is there after truth except error and falsehood? It is known that falsehood cannot stand against truth. It is bound to fall, and truth is bound to vanquish error and falsehood.

Truth, in its effectiveness, as well as in its conveyance to the destination, is not inconsistent nor does it fail to bring about its result. If a believer overcomes an enemy of the truth, in this life, then he is the victor and also gets the good reward for it in the hereafter. If, on the other hand, he is defeated by the enemy of the truth, and the enemy compels him to adopt things which are disliked by Allāh, it is his duty to act accordingly and save his life — and Allāh will be pleased with that apparently irreligious behaviour. Allāh says:*...except* (when) *you guard yourselves against* (them) *for fear from them* (3:28). And if the enemy kills him, then it will be for him an everlasting pleasant life, not death. Allāh says: *And do not speak of those who are slain in Allāh's way as dead*; *nay,* (they are) *alive, but you do not perceive.*(2:154)

In this way, the believer is never vanquished; he is always victorious — either both apparently and in reality, or only in reality. Allāh refers to this aspect in the verse, *Say*: *Do you await for us but one of the two most excellent things ...* (9:52)

The truth, therefore, is always victorious in this world.

Nature, i.e. creation, is leading the human species towards truth and felicity — it is leading it creatively — and certainly it will reach its goal. The apparent victory of falsehood which we experience from time to time is not worthy of our attention: these are stepping stones for the truth to reach its height. Why should we worry? 'Time' has yet to come to its end, the world still exists, and the system of creation is still all powerful. There is enough time for truth to overpower falsehood. This much about the victory of truth in appearance. There is no need to explain in so many words about its victory in reality: we all know that the truth is always victorious.

Why did we say in the beginning that every good characteristic, such as permanence, stability and beauty, belongs to the true word and deed; and every evil characteristic, such as instability, infirmity, evil and

ugliness, belongs to the false word and deed? We have mentioned previously the following verses: *That is Allāh, your Lord, the Creator of every thing*; *there is no god but He*; *whence are you then turned away?* (40:62); *Who made good everything that He has created ...* (32:7); *Whatever benefit comes to you, it is from Allāh, and whatever misfortune befalls you, it is from yourself*. (6:79) All these verses show that wrongs and evils are ‘‘non-existence’’; and as such they cannot be attributed to Allāh who is the Creator, Originator and Bestower of existence.

The case of the good is just the opposite. It is, therefore, attributed to Allāh. And it is because of this that good words and good deeds are the source of every beauty and elegance, and the origin of every virtue and felicity (like stability and permanence, blessing and benefit), in contrast to evil words and deeds. Allāh says: *He sends down water from the heavens, then the valleys flow according to their measure, and the torrent bears along the swelling foam*; *and from what they melt in the fire, for the sake of* (making) *ornaments or apparatus, arises a scum like it*; *thus does Allāh compare truth and falsehood; then as for the scum, it passes away as a worthless thing*; *and as for that which profits the people, it remains in the earth*; *thus does Allāh set forth parables*. (13:17)

E) Actions with reference to reason:

Good words and deeds conform with the dictates of reason, in contrast with the evil words and deeds. It has already been explained that Allāh has made his laws on the foundation of reason. By reason we mean that faculty by which man perceives right and wrong, and distinguishes between good and bad.

It is for this reason that Allāh commanded man to follow his reason, and forbade everything which deranges the reason or throws it into confusion, like drinking alcoholic liquids, gambling, uttering vain words, adultery, cheating, and so on. He also forbade lying, slandering, false accusation, embezzlement, murder, and, in short, all such things which throw reason out of gear and lead it to a wrong judgement. Human life is built on the basis of correct perception and proper thinking, in all its affairs – individual as well as social. If you analyse the personal and collective ills of humanity, you will find that they spring from actions which disturb and confuse the reason. This subject will be explained,

God willing, in another place.

TRADITIONS

Ibn Jarīr has narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that he said: ''I was riding (on a camel) behind the Messenger of Allāh. He said: 'O Ibn 'Abbās! Be satisfied with what Allāh (*qaddara,* قدّر) has measured (decreed) for you even if it is against your wishes; because it is so written in the Book of Allāh.' I said: 'O Messenger of Allāh! And where is it, and I have read the Qur'ān?' He said: 'and it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you; and Allāh knows, while you do not know.' '' [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

The author says: This tradition implies that *taqdīr* (measure, decree, التّقدير) is a general word, covering both legislation and creation, and that its meaning varies according to the context. But this tradition does not show that *'asā* (may be, عسى) can be used to mean obligation. it has been explained that this word is used in the Qur'ān in its literal meaning, and that is ''may-be'', expectation. Therefore, the opinion expressed by a commentator that wherever the word *'asā* (عسى) has been used in the Qur'ān, the ''may-be'' of Allāh implies compulsion is not worthy of consideration. Even more strange is the view of another that wherever ''may-be'' comes in the Qur'ān it indicates compulsion (obligation) except in two verses, one in the chapter of *at-Taḥrīm* (*Maybe if he divorces you* ...), and the other in the chapter of *al-'Isrā* (*It may be that your Lord will have mercy on you*...)

There is a tradition narrated by Ibn Jarīr from the chain of as-Suddī: The Messenger of Allāh sent a company consisting of seven of his companions, under the command of 'Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh al-Asadī. The other members were: 'Ammār ibn Yāsir, Abū Ḥudhayfah ibn 'Utbah ibn Rabī'ah, Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, 'Utbah ibn Ghazwān as-Sulamī (an ally of Banī Nawfal), Sahl ibn Bayḍā', 'Āmir ibn Fuhayrah and Wāqid ibn 'Abdullāh al-Yarbū'ī (an ally of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb).

The Prophet wrote a letter and gave it to 'Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh telling him not to read it until he camped at Malal. When 'Abdullāh camped at the valley of Malal, he opened the letter. Written in it was: ''Proceed till you camp in the valley of Nakhlah.'' On reading it he told his companions: ''Anyone who is ready to die let him proceed (with me) and

make his will, because I am making my will and proceeding as ordered by the Messenger of Allāh.'' So he went on, and only Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ and 'Utbah ibn Ghazwān remained behind because they had lost their camel. And 'Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh went forward, and lo! they unexpectedly met al-Ḥakam ibn Kaysān, 'Abdullāh ibn al-Mughīrah ibn 'Uthmān and 'Amr al-Ḥaḍramī. They fought and arrested al-Ḥakam ibn Kaysān and 'Abdullāh ibn al-Mughīrah; and al-Mughīrah fled away; and 'Amr al-Ḥaḍramī was killed by Wāqid ibn 'Abdullāh. And it was the first booty taken by the companions of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.). When they returned to Medina with the two captives and the booty, the polytheists said: ''Muḥammad thinks that he follows the commands of Allāh and he is the first to desecrate the sacred month.'' Then Allāh sent down the verse: *They ask you concerning the sacred month about fighting in it. Say*: *Fighting in it is a grave matter*; is not allowed. And what you did, 0 polytheists! is still graver than killing in the sacred month, because you disbelieved in Allāh, and hindered Muḥammad from Allāh's way; and the mischief, that is polytheism, is graver before Allāh than the killing. And this is the saying of Allāh, *and hindering* (men) *from Allāh's way and denying it* ...[*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

The author says: The traditions giving this and similar meanings are numerous from Sunnī chains. And this meaning is also narrated in *Majma'u 'l-bayān*; and some traditions say that the company consisted of eight persons, the ninth being their leader.

Ibn Isḥāq, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and al-Bayhaqī have narrated from the chain of Yazīd ibn Rawmān from 'Urwah, that he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh sent 'Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh to Nakhlah, and told him: 'Stay there until you bring to us some news about (the activities and intentions of) the Quraysh.' And he did not order him to fight. And it was in the sacred month. And he (i.e. the Messenger of Allāh) wrote for him a letter before informing him about the journey, and told him: 'Go out with your companions; when you have travelled two days, open (this) your letter and look into it and proceed to do what I have ordered you in it. And do not force any of your companions to go with you (against his wishes)' When he travelled for two days, he opened the letter and found in it (the words): 'Proceed further until you camp at Nakhlah, and bring for us whatever information reaches you about the Quraysh.' When he

(‘Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh) read the order, he told his companions: ‘Hearing and obeying! Whoever among you desires martyrdom, should come with me, for I am proceeding on the order of the Messenger of Allāh. And whoever among you dislikes it let him go back, because the Messenger of Allāh has forbidden me to compel anyone of you (against his wishes).’ The whole group proceeded with him until they reached Najrān where Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ and ‘Utbah ibn Ghazwān lost a camel which they rode alternately. They, therefore, remained behind to search for it; and the others went forward till they camped at Nakhlah. Then passed by them ‘Amr al-Ḥaḍramī, al-Ḥakam ibn Kaysān, ‘Uthmān and al-Mughīrah ibn ‘Abdullāh; with them was the merchandise which they had brought from aṭ-Ṭā’if: condiments and oil. When they saw them, Wāqid ibn ‘Abdullāh rose high to show himself to them, and he had shaved his head. When they saw him with shaved head, ‘Amr said: ‘No harm will befall you from him.’ And the companions of the Messenger of Allāh consulted with one another about the polytheists; and it was the last day of *Jumāda ’l-ukhrā*. They thought: if we kill them it will be in the sacred month, and if we leave them, they will enter Mecca this night and they will be on guard. At last, they all decided to kill them. Wāqid ibn ‘Abdullāh at-Tamīmī shot an arrow at ‘Amr al-Ḥaḍramī and killed him. ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Abdullāh and al-Ḥakam ibn Kaysān were captured, and al-Mughīrah ran away and they could not catch him. And they took the caravan and came with it to the Messenger of Allāh. He told them: ‘By God! I had not ordered you to fight in the sacred month.’ And he kept the matter of the goods and the captives in suspense and did not accept anything from it. When the Messenger of Allāh said to them what he said, they felt ashamed and thought that they had fallen into perdition; and their brethren, the Muslims, upbraided them harshly. When the report of the incident reached the Quraysh, they said: ‘Muḥammad spilled unlawful blood, and took property, and arrested men and desecrated the sacred month.’’ Then Allāh sent down the verse: *They ask you concerning the sacred month about fighting in it* ... When it was revealed, the Messenger of Allāh retained the merchandise and freed the two captives on ransom. The Muslims asked: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! Do you hope that it will be (counted as) a *jihād* (religious war) for us? Then Allāh revealed the

verse: *Surely those who believed and those who fled* (their home) *and strove hard in the way of Allāh these hope for the mercy of Allāh*; *and Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful.* And they were eight people, and the ninth was their leader, 'Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh.'' [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

The author says: There are other traditions showing that this verse: *Surely those who believed ... Merciful,* was revealed about the group of 'Abdullāh ibn Jaḥsh.

This verse proves that if someone performs an act of obedience, with the intention of coming nearer to Allāh, but it turns out to be a mistake, not a good deed, then he is not counted as a sinner because he did it inadvertently. Also, the last sentence of the verse, mentioning the forgiveness of Allāh, shows that divine forgiveness covers even those situations where there was no sin or error. Therefore, the use of the word ''forgiveness'' or its derivatives does not necessarily mean that the recipient of the divine forgiveness had committed a sin.

The traditions imply that ''They ask'' refers to the Muslims, not the polytheists who ridiculed the Muslims. This view is supported by the tradition of Ibn 'Abbās mentioned under the preceding verse: ''I did not see any people better than the companions of Muḥammad. They did not ask him except thirteen questions till he was taken away (from this world), all of those questions are in the Qur'ān. Among them are: *They ask you about the intoxicants and games of chance*; *They ask you about the sacred month* ... Also, the context of the verse supports it, as the words: *and they will go on fighting with you ... ,* are addressed to the believers.

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلِ الْعَفْوَ كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللهُ لَكُمُ الآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ـ ٢١٩ . فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْيَتَامىٰ قُلْ إِصْلَاحٌ لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ وَإِنْ تُخَالِطُوهُمْ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَاللهُ يَعْلَمُ الْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللهُ لَأَعْنَتَكُمْ إِنَّ اللهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ـ ٢٢٠ .

They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance, Say: *In both of them there is a great sin and* (some) *profit for men, and their sin is greater than their profit. And they ask you as to what they should spend. Say*: *Whatever can be spared. Thus does Allāh make clear to you the signs, that you may ponder*. (219) *About this world and the hereafter. And they ask you concerning the orphans*. *Say*: *To set right for them* (their affairs) *is good*; *and if you mingle with them, they are your brethren*; *and Allāh knows the mischief maker from the well-doer*; *and if Allāh had willed, He would certainly have made it hard for you; surely Allāh is Mighty, Wise*. (220)

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance.* : According to the language, intoxicant (*khamr,* الخمر) is every liquid which is made to intoxicate. The root word, *khamr* (الخمر) means to ''to hide''. The liquor is called *khamr* (الخمر) because it hides reason and does not allow it to discriminate between right and wrong, between good and bad.

From the same root is derived *khimār* (الخمار) i.e., the veil which covers the head of a woman. *Khammartu 'l-'inā'*(خمّرت الانآء); means ''I covered the opening of the pot''. When yeast is added to dough, they say *ikhmarrati 'l-'ajīn* (اخمرّت العجين). And the yeast itself is called *khamīrah* (الخميرة), because when it is mixed with flour, it covers the flour when it rises and ferments.

The Arabs did not know any alcoholic beverages except those made

from grapes, dates and barley. Gradually, new kinds were invented and now its types and kinds are innumerable, with varying grades of intoxication. But all are intoxicant (*khamr,* الخمر). *Maysir* (الميسر), according to the language, is gambling. The gambler is called *yāsir* (الياسر).

The root word, *yusr* (اليسر) means ease. Gambling was called *maysir* (الميسر) because by it one might get wealth with ease without going to the trouble of earning and working.

The word *maysir* (الميسر) was mostly used for a particular method of gambling with arrows. It was also called *azlām* (الازلام) and *aqlām* (الاقلام). It was played by ten persons in the following manner:

A camel was purchased, slaughtered and divided into twentyfour parts. There were ten arrows: each had a separate name and its specified share. Their names (with their shares in brackets) are given hereunder:

Fadhdh (1); *taw'am* (2); *raqīb* (3); *hils* (4) *nāfis* (5); *musbil* (6); *mu'allā* (7). The remaining three arrows drawn with the names of the participants; anyone on whose name one of the first seven arrows was drawn took the number of the shares alloted to it; those on whose names the last-named three arrows were drawn got nothing and had to pay the price of the camel.

Qur'ān: *Say*: *In both of them ... sin is greater than profit*: Sin (*ithm,* الاثم) is near to evil (*dhanb,* الذّنب) in meaning. It means a condition in the thing or in reason which prevents the man from getting the good. In other words, *ithm* (الاثم) is that evil which brings unhappiness and failure even in other affairs, and disturbs the felicity of life even in other matters.

Clearly, alcoholic drinks and games of chance fit this description.

The health hazards of alcohol have been described in untold numbers of books written by ancient and modern physicians, in which they have listed the havoc created by it in the stomach, the intestines, the liver, the lungs, the nervous system, the veins and arteries, the heart and the organs of perception, i.e. the eyes, the tongue, etc. The data collected by them show the vast magnitude of the damage to the millions and millions of people who are attacked by a variety of diseases caused by this killing poison.

The social and moral disasters appearing in the wake of addiction to

drink are too well-known to need any description. Depravity of character, debauchery, shamelessness, the leakage of secrets, scandals, slanders, destruction and damage to others, crimes, murder — name any immorality, alcohol will lead to it. In short, it nullifies all ethical laws and moral values upon which are based the felicity and bliss of this life and, more particularly, the values of chastity and probity. Who can protect society from a drunkard who does not understand what he says and does not know what he does. Look at the crimes which have wrecked havoc throughout the world and have made human life a misery; search for their causes, and behind almost all of them you will see the hand of alcohol, directly or indirectly manipulating the minds of the criminals.

Nobody can deny the damage inflicted by alcohol upon the mind. Is there any need to describe how it negates the reason, puts the thinking process out of equilibrium and distorts the feelings and perceptions, not only during intoxication, but even afterwards. This damage to the whole system of perception and reason is the biggest sin and disaster of alcohol, from which sprout all other sins and disasters.

Islam, as described earlier, has based its laws on true reason, and has most emphatically forbidden all such actions which hinder the proper functioning of reason. Intoxicants, games of chance, adultery, falsehood and other such sins come in this category. The activities which are most damaging to the faculty of reason are drinking alcohol (among the deeds) and speaking lies (among the words).

These activities which nullify the rule of reason, and especially the politics which is based on alcohol and lies, endanger humanity, and destroy the foundation of happiness. Whenever such a policy bears a fruit, it proves far more bitter than the previous one. When a burden proves unbearable, they add on some more weight and hope that the practice will make the bearer perfect, and would give him more strength! Such endeavours result in failure; such activities end in loss. This one characteristic of Islam — that it has based its *sharī'ah* on reason and has prohibited all such things which damage it — is enough to place it at the top of all the systems invented by human beings throughout the world.

Human beings, because of their animal tendencies, eagerly run towards the satisfaction of their lust. Lustful activities easily contaminate the environment, in contrast to chastity and piety. It is easy to acquire a bad habit and very difficult to leave it. That is why Allāh legislated such

laws gradually, and led people to the ultimate goal step by step and sympathetically. One of those widely-spread evils was the drinking of alcohol. And a cursory glance at the four verses revealed about the subject will show how, by easy stages, they were weaned from this bad habit.

First, Allāh revealed, *Say*: *My Lord has only prohibited indecencies, those of them that are apparent as well as those that are concealed, and sin and rebellion without justice, and that you associate with Allāh that for which He has not sent down any authority, and that you say against Allāh what you do not know.* (7:33)

This verse was revealed in Mecca, and it has clearly forbidden the sin (*ḥarrama,* حرّم). Now we know that there is sin — great sin even — in alcohol, although at that time Allāh did not clarify what sin was. This ambiguity was, perhaps, a sort of compassion; it was as though the *sharī'ah* wanted to overlook that sin of theirs for the time being. The same is the reason for the indirect hint in another verse of the same Meccan period: *And of the fruits of the palms and the grapes — you obtain from them intoxication and goodly provision* (16:67) It separated intoxication from ''goodly provision'' but stopped short of declaring it as a ''bad provision''.

Apparently people were not aware that intoxication was a great sin, until the verse was revealed: *O you who believe! Do not go near prayer when you are intoxicated until you know* (well) *what you say* ... (4:43)

This verse was revealed at Medina, and it promulgated the partial prohibition of liquor in the best of the times and the best of the places — at the time of prayer in the mosque.

Reason and the context of the verse shows that this verse could not have been revealed after the verses of the chapters of *al-Baqarah* and *al-Mā'idah* (which will be described shortly), because those verses promulgate total prohibition. There was no reason why a partial ban should be imposed after a total prohibition. Also, we know that this prohibition was promulgated gradually, and such a case demands proceeding from an easier step to a more difficult one, and not vice versa.

Then came the verse under discussion. It says that there is in intoxicants and games of chance *a great sin and* (some) *profit for men, and their sin is greater than their profit.*

This verse, revealed after the above-mentioned verse 4:43, promulgates

total prohibition of intoxicants and games of chance. It clearly says that ''there is great sin'' in these two evils. And verse 7:33, mentioned in the beginning, revealed at Mecca, had clearly prohibited sin.

This explanation exposes the absurdity of a commentator who says that this verse was not clear about the prohibition of liquor. First, let us give you a gist of what he says:-

''This verse of the chapter of *al-Baqarah* was not clear about the prohibition of alcohol and gambling; the words of Allāh that there is great sin in them only show that these are sinful acts, and sin means harm. Even if we say that every harmful thing is prohibited, it does not include those things which are partially harmful and partially beneficial. That is why there was a difference of opinion about alcohol among the companions of the Prophet. Some of them left drinking after the revelation of this verse, while others continued to drink. Perhaps, the drinkers thought that they could easily enjoy its profit safeguarding themselves from its harms. When the ground was thus prepared, Allāh revealed the verse of the chapter of *al-Mā'idah* which totally and clearly prohibits these things: *O you believe! Intoxicants and games of chance and* (sacrificing to) *stones set up and* (dividing by) *arrows are an abomination of Satan's handiword*; *shun it therefore that you may be successful ... Will you then desist?* (5:93-94)''

Now let us look critically at the above argument:

First: A major part of this argument rests on the assumption that sin means harm. But it is wrong. Just because in this verse it is followed by the words, *and* (some) *profit for men,* it does not imply that its meaning is ''harm'' or ''loss'', i.e. the opposite of ''benefit''. How can the word ''sin'' (*ithm,* الاثم) be taken to mean ''harm'' in the verses listed below? :-

And whoever associates anything with Allāh, he devises indeed a great sin. (4:48)

And whoever conceals it (i.e. testimony), *his heart is surely sinful*. (2:283)

Surely I wish that you should bear my sin as well as your own sin. (5:29)

Every man of them shall have what he has earned of sin. (24:11)

And whoever earns a sin, he earns it only against his own self. (4:111)

There are many such verses.

Second: The verse did not say that .the order was given ‘‘because’’ of the harm inherent in alcohol. It just promulgated the law. There was no justification for the companions to follow their own opinion in this case.

Even if we admit, for the sake of argument, that the verse gives the reason for that order, that reason is not the harm, but the greatness of the harm as compared with the profit. The verse says in clear words, *and their sin is greater than their profit.* Such a clear declaration leaves no room at all for the exercise of one’s own opinion. Opinion has no place in the presence of a clear order of Allāh and the Apostle.

Third: Let us suppose, for the time being, that the verse did not clearly say that liquor and gambling were forbidden. But did it not say in clear words that they were great sins? Was not this verse revealed at Medina? Had not verse 7:33, revealed years ago at Mecca, clearly prohibited the sin? What excuse can be offered by those companions who followed their own opinion. in opposition to these verses of Mecca and Medina, which taken jointly clearly prohibit alcohol and games of chance?

Verse 7:33 prohibits all sins. And this verse under discussion uses the adjective ‘great’ (*kabīr,* الكبير) and ‘greater’ (*akbar,*. الاكبر) for the sins of alcohol and gambling. In view of this nobody can remain in any doubt that these two evils are the greatest of all sins; nor can there remain any doubt about their absolute prohibition. The Qur’ān has termed murder, the hiding of testimony, lying and slander etc. as ‘‘sin’’, but it has not used the adjective ‘‘great’’ for any sin except polytheism (*….and whoever associates anything with Allāh, he devises indeed a great sin. —* 4:48) and alcohol and games of chance.

In short, there is no doubt that this verse clearly prohibits these two sins.

Lastly the two verses of the chapter *al-Mā’idah* were revealed: *O you who believe! Intoxicants and games of chance and* (sacrificing to) *stones set up and* (dividing by) *arrows are only an abomination of Satan's handiwork; shun it therefore that you may be successful. Satan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allāh and from prayer. Will you then desist?* (5:93—94)

The last sentence (*Will you then desist?*) shows that the Muslims had

not desisted from drinking alcohol even after the revelation of the verse of the chapter *al Baqarah* under discussion; and that there was a need for such a strong admonition.

This much about liquor. So far as gambling is concerned its social evils and the ruin caused by it in the structure of life are well-known, and need no description. But we shall further explain it in the fifth chapter.

Now we come back to the meaning of the words used in the verse. Sin (*ithm,* الأثم) has just now been explained. Greatness (*kibr,* الكبر) in volume is as numerousness (*kathrah,* الكثرة) in number. Their opposite are smallness (*ṣighar,* الصّغر) and paucity (*qillah,* القلة) respectively.

These two adjectives are relative ones. When there are two things, one of them may be greater than the other, which then will be called smaller than the first. But the first one which was called ‘‘greater’’ may be smaller than a third one. If there was no comparison, there would be neither the greatness nor the smallness; nor would there by an numerousness or paucity.

Probably people first became aware of greatness when they looked at the size of material things around themselves. Later on they extended this concept to mental visions and ideas. Allāh says: *Surely it* (i.e. hell) *is one of the greatest* (misfortunes). (74:35); *a great* (i.e. grievous) *word it is that comes out of their mouths.* (18:5); *great* (i.e. hard) *to the unbelievers is that which you call them to.* (42:13)

‘Iẓam (العظم) has the same meaning as *kibar* (الكبر): both denote greatness. Apparently *‘iẓam* (العظم) is derived from *‘aẓm* (bone, العظم); as the greatness of the body of an animal or man is related to the size of the skeleton - the bones inside — the word *‘aẓm* (bone, العظم) was metaphorically used for greatness, and gradually ‘‘greatness’’ became its first meaning.

Naf‘ (profit, النفع) is opposite of *ḍarar* (harm, loss, الضرر) These words are used for the things which are desired or disliked because of other things; while good and bad are used for the things which are liked or disliked by themselves.

Profits for men: It refers to the monetary gains as well as the amusement and merry-making for which people indulge in these two sins.

Allāh used here the plural form (profits); but while comparing it with sin He used the singular form (their sin is greater than their profit). As the comparison was in size, and not in number, there was no reason to use the plural which describes the number, not the size.

Qur'ān: *And they ask you as to what they should spend. Say*:*Whatever can be spared*.

'Afw (العفو) originally meant 'to go to a thing to get it.' Then, keeping in view various connections and relations, it came to be used for forgiveness, obliteration of footprints and moderation in spending. It is this last meaning which is intended in this verse, and that is why it has been translated as ''whatever can be spared''.

In this verse, the reply fits the question in the same way as was explained in the verse 2:215, *They ask you to what they should spend. Say*: *Whatever of good you spend, it is for the parents ...*

Qur'ān: *Thus does Allāh make clear to you the signs that you may ponder about this world and the hereafter. Fid-dunyā wa 'l-ākhirah* (فى الدّنيا و الاخرة) literally means ''in this world and the hereafter''. But it does not mean 'you may ponder while you are in this world and in the hereafter'. It refers to the subject upon which men are expected to ponder. That is why we have translated it ''may ponder about this world ...''

The verse exhorts the believers to ponder on the realities and affairs of both the worlds. This world is a place which Allāh has created for you to live in and for you to earn in it what might be beneficial to you in your permanent home, i.e. the hereafter. That is the place where you will return to your Lord and He will give you the recompense for what you did in this world.

This verse urges people to enquire about, and investigate, the realities of existence, the percepts of the beginning and the end and the mysteries of nature; and to think and ponder upon the social concepts, moral and ethical values, and the laws of life governing individuals and groups. In short, man is expected to think about all the knowledge right from his beginning upto his returning to his Lord, as well as all the affairs coming between these points which have any bearing on the. happiness and misery of mankind.

This verse also shows that although the Qur'ān demands complete obedience from man towards the command of Allāh and His Apostle, without any if and but, yet it likes people to ponder on those commands and their philosophy so that they may grasp their realities and, instead of blindly following the laws, may see the light of those brilliant teachings and follow that light to ultimate destination.

Thus Allāh does make clear probably means the explanation of the philosophy behind the given laws and commands, and the clarification of the fundamentals of the faith and belief.

Qur'ān: *And they ask you concerning the orphans. Say*: *''To set right for them* (their affairs) *is good.''* There is a hint, a clear indication even, in this verse that it was revealed to lighten some burden — it allows mingling with the orphans, and then goes on to say: *and if Allāh had willed, He would certainly have made it hard for you.* It shows that prior to this verse the rules concerning the guardianship of the orphans were hard and difficult, which had caused anxiety and alarm among the Muslims, and which led them to ask the question referred to in the verse.

There were some verses about the orphans, very severe in tone: *And give to the orphans their property, and do not substitute worthless* (things) *for* (their) *good* (ones), *and do not devour their property* (as an addition) *to your own property; this is surely a great crime.* (4:2);*As for those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their bellies and soon they shall enter into burning fire.* (4:10) Apparently the verse under discussion was revealed after these verses; and the traditions, which will be quoted later, support this view.

The *iṣlāh* (to set right, اصلاح) is used here as a common noun. It denotes, according to the usage of the Arabic language, really good management, not just a show; and the sentence, *and Allāh knows the mischief-maker from the well-doer,* points to this.

Qur'ān: *and if you mingle with them, they are your brethren*: This sentence refers to the Islamic concept of the equality of all the believers. This concept nullifies all distinctions which are the basic cause of every mischief which appears in society. It abolishes various types of injustice and rebellion; putting oneself on a high pedestal, treating others as one's slaves, thinking of them as an inferior, and weak species. This abolition of differences creates equilibrium in various social weights; there appears a fine balance between a weak orphan and his powerful guardian, between a rich tycoon and a wretched beggar, and so on. Allāh says: *The believers are but brethren.* (49:10)

Now, the verse under discussion allows the guardian to mingle with

the orphan only when it is done like the mingling of two brothers who have equal obligation towards each other. If something is taken from an orphan's property, then something of equal value must be given to him and added to his property. In this context, this verse runs parallel to the verse mentioned earlier, *And give to the orphans their property, and do not substitute worthless* (things) *for* (their) *good* (ones), *and do not devour their property* (as an addition) *to your own property*; *this is surely a great crime*. (4:2) A comparison between the two verses shows that the verse under discussion has somewhat lessoned the burden of the guardians; and the sentence, *and Allāh knows the mischief-maker from the well-doer,* also hints at this relaxation of rigour. The meaning is: Now you may mingle with your wards, the orphans (and this is the relaxation of the previous rule); but the mingling should be as of two brother who have equal obligations towards each other. If this condition is fulfilled, then there should be no anxiety and fear on your part. If that mingling is with good intentions, and in order to set their affairs right for them, then it is good; and the reality cannot be hidden from Allāh, and He will not reproach you just because you mingled and mixed with the orphans, provided you did it for their good, like brethren, and Allāh knows the difference between a mischief-maker and a well-doer.

Qur'ān: *and Allāh knows the mischief-maker from the well doer*: Here the preposition, from (*min,* من) has been used after ''knows'' (*ya'lamu,* يعلم); probably it is a hint that ''knows'' in this verse has the significance of ''distinguishes''; and the sentence means, ''Allāh distinguishes the mischief-maker from the well-doer.''

'Anat (العنت) means difficulty and hardship.

TRADITIONS

'Alī ibn Yaqṭīn said: ''al-Mahdī asked Abu 'l-Ḥasan al-Kāẓim (a.s.) about whether intoxicants were prohibited in the Book of Allāh, because the people know that it is not allowed but do not know that it is prohibited.

''The Imām said: 'But it is prohibited.' He asked: 'Where in the Book of Allāh is it forbidden? O Abu '1-Ḥasan!' He replied: 'The word of Allāh: *Say*: My *Lord has only prohibited indecencies, those of them that are apparent as well as those that are concealed, and sin and*

rebellion without justice ...' (7:33) Then the Imām explained: 'And as for sin, it is intoxicants themselves, because Allāh said somewhere else, *They ask you about intoxicants and games of chance. Say*: *''In both of them there is a great sin and* (some) *profits, for men, and their sin is greater than their profits.''* So the sin according to the Book of Allāh is intoxicants and games of chance, and their sin is greater than their profit, as Allāh has said.'

''al-Mahdī said: 'O 'Alī ibn Yaqṭīn! This is the legal decree of the house of Hāshim.' I said: 'You spoke the truth, O leader of the faithful! Praise be to Allāh who did not take this knowledge out from you, O people of the house!' ''

'Alī ibn Yaqtīn says: ''By God, al-Mahdī could not restrain himself from saying to me, 'You spoke the truth, O Rāfidī!' '' [*al-Kāfī*]

The author says: The meaning of this tradition can be understood from the commentary.

There is a tradition narrated from Abū Basīr that one of the two Imāms (i.e. fifth or sixth — a.s.) said: ''Verily Allāh made a house for sin, then He made a door for the house, then He made a lock for the door, then He made a key for the lock; and (that) key of sin is intoxicants.'' [*al-Kāfī*]

There is another tradition from Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.): ''The Messenger of Allāh said: 'Verily intoxicants are the head of every sin!' '' [*ibid.*]

There is a tradition narrated by Ismā'īl, in which he said: ''Abu Ja'far (a.s.) went into the Sacred Mosque; some Qurayshites saw him and said: 'He is the god of the people of Iraq.' Someone said: 'If you send one of you to him.' So a young man from among them came to him and asked: 'O Uncle! What is the greatest of the great (sins)?' He said: 'Drinking alcohol.' '' [*ibid.*]

There is a tradition narrated by Abu '1-Bilād, that one of the two Imāms (al-Bāqir or aṣ-Ṣādiq — a.s.) said: ''Allāh has not been disobeyed with anything more powerful than drinking alcohol. Verily one of them leaves the obligatory prayers, and jumps upon his mother and daughter and sister, and he does not know.'' [*ibid.*]

''An atheist asked Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.): 'Why did Allāh prohibit alcohol when there is nothing more delicious than it?' (The Imām said: 'He prohibited it because it is the mother of all wicked things and the head of every evil. There come a time to the drinker ,of it when he loses

his reason, then he does not know his Lord, and leaves no sin but that he commits it …' '' [*al-Iḥtijāj*]

The author says: The traditions explain one another and experience and observation support them.

A tradition from Jābir is reported that Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said: ''The Messenger of Allāh cursed ten persons concerning an alcoholic beverage — the one who plants it, the one who guards it, the one who squeezes its juice out, the one who drinks it, the one who serves it, the one who transports it, the one to whom it is trans ported, the one who sells it, the one who purchases it, and the one who eats its price.'' [*al-Kāfī*]

Another tradition says that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''The Messenger of Allāh said: 'Cursed is he, cursed is he who sits at a table where alcohol is drunk.' '' [*ibid., al-Maḥāsin*]

The author says: The above two traditions are confirmed by the words of Allāh, *and do not help one another in sin and transgression*. (5:3)

aṣ-Ṣadūq reports through his chains, from Abū Amāmah that he said: ''The Messenger of Allāh said: 'There are four persons at whom Allāh will not look (with mercy) on the day of resurrection — the one who is disobedient (to his parents), the one who helps a man and then reminds him of it, the one who denies the destiny (decreed by Allāh), and the one who habitually drinks alcohol'.'' [*al-Khiṣāl*]

Ibnu 'sh-Shaykh has reported in *al-Amālī*, through his chains, from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that the Prophet said: ''My Lord, Great is His Glory! has sworn thus: No servant of mine will drink alcohol in this world but that I shall make him drink on the day of resurrection from the boiling water (of hell) as much as he had drunk alcohol; (it would make no difference) whether after that he is punished or forgiven.'' The Prophet said: ''Verily the one who drinks alcohol shall come on the day of resurrection, with blackened face, blue eyes, a slanting jaw-bone and running saliva, licking his tongue from his back-side.''

Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said: ''It is an obligation upon Allāh (i.e. Allāh has made it incumbent upon Himself) that He will make the drinker of alcohol drink what comes out from the vulva of fornicating women. From that vulva will come out pus and thick blood, its heat and stink will offend (even) the inmates of the fire.'' [*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī]

The author says: These traditions may be supported by the word of Allāh, *Surely the tree of Zaqqūm is the food of the sinful, like molten brass*; *it shall boil in* (their) *bellies, like the boiling of hot water. Seize him, then drag him down into the midst of Hell; then pour over his head of the torment of the boiling water*: *'Taste* (it)*; you forsooth are the mighty, the honourable!* (44:43—49)

There are numerous traditions with the same meaning as described above.

There is a tradition narrated by al-Washshā' that he heard Abu'l-Ḥasan (a.s.) saying: *''Maysir* (الميسر) is gambling.'' [*al-Kāfī*]

The author says: Traditions giving this explanation are numerous; and there is no doubt whatsoever about the meaning.

It is reported, under the verse, *And they ask you as to what they should spend ... ,* that Ibn 'Abbās said: ''Verily, some people from the companions, when they were told to spend in the way of Allāh, came to the Prophet and said: 'We do not know what this ''spending'' is which we have been ordered in our properties. So, what should we spend from it?' Then Allāh revealed: *and they ask you as to what they should spend. Say*: *'Whatever can be spared'* And before that, one used to spend his wealth until he no longer had anything left to give in alms, and until there remained no property to eat from.'' [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

It is narrated from Yaḥyā that he was told that Ma'ādh ibn-Jabal and Tha'labah came to the Messenger of Allāh and said: ''O Messenger of Allāh! Verily we have our servants and families; what, therefore, should we spend from our properties?'' Then Allāh revealed: *And they ask you as to what they should spend. Say*: *'Whatever can be spared' ''* [*ibid.*]

It is reported that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said about the word '*afw* (العفو); which we have translated as ''whatever can be spared'' that *'afw* is the middle (course). [*ibid.,* al-'Ayyāshī]

And it is written that al-Bāqir (a.s.) and aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said that it is modicum, a sufficiency. And the tradition of Abū Basīr interprets it as frugality, thrift. [al-'Ayyāshī]

It is reported from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the verse: *And they who when they spend, are neither extravagant nor parsimonious, and* (keep) *between these the just mean* (25:67) that he said: ''This (stage) is after

this stage; it is the middle.'' [*ibid*]

al-Bāqir (a.s.) said: '' *'afw* (العفو) is what is in excess of the maintenance of the year.'' [*Majma'u 'l-bayān*]

The author says: The tradition express the same meanings in different words; and the last one gives an example of *'afw* (العفو)

There are innumerable traditions showing the excellence of alms, its ways, place and quantity; some of which shall be quoted in the relevant places, God willing.

There is a tradition from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) about the verse: *And they ask you concerning the orphans* ... that he said: ''When the verse: (As for) *those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their bellies and soon they shall enter burning fire,* everyone who had any orphan with him turned him out; and they asked the Messenger of Allāh about turning them out. Then Allāh revealed: *And they ask you concerning the orphans. Say: ' To set right for them* (their affairs) *is good; and if you mingle with them, they are your brethren; and Allāh knows the mischief-maker from the well-doer ...* ' ''[*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī]

There is a tradition from Ibn 'Abbās that he said: When Allāh revealed: *And do not approach the property of the orphan except in the best manner ...* (6:153) and *those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly ... ,* every one who had an orphan with him went (to his home) and separated his (orphan's) food from his own food and his drink from his own drink; and he put some extra portion in the orphan's food, and kept it reserved for him till he ate it or it deteriorated and he threw it away. This system proved very hard for them, so they mentioned it to the Messenger of Allāh. Then Allāh revealed: *And they ask you concerning the orphans ... and if you mingle with them, they are your brethren…* Then they mixed their food with their own food and their drink with their own drink. [*ad-Durru 'l-manthūr*]

The author says: The same thing has been narrated from Sa'īd ibn Jubayr, 'Aṭā' and Qatādah.

وَلاَ تَنكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَاتِ حَتَّى يُؤْمِنَّ وَلأَمَةٌ مُؤْمِنَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِن مُشْرِكَةٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ وَلاَ تُنكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَتَّى يُؤْمِنُوا وَلَعَبْدٌ مُؤْمِنٌ خَيْرٌ مِن مُشْرِكٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكُمْ أُولَئِكَ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ وَاللهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيُبَيِّنُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ـ ٢٢١ ․

And do not marry the idolatresses until they believe; and certainly a believing bondswoman is better than an idolatress, even though she should allure you; *and do not give* (believing women) *in marriage to idolaters until they believe*; *and certainly a believing bondsman is better than an idolater, even though he should allure you*; *those invite to the fire, and Allāh invites to the garden and to forgiveness by His leave; and makes clear His signs for men, so that they may be mindful*. (221)

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *And do not marry the idolatresses until they believe*: ar-Rāghib has said in *al-Mufradāt*: The original meaning of *nikāḥ* (النّكاح) is *'aqd* (the marriage-tie, العقد). then it was metaphorically used for sexual intercourse. It is impossible that it could be the other way round, because all the words denoting sexual inter course are but metaphors; they thought it indecent to mention it, just as they disliked to declare the act itself. It is not possible, for one who does not intend to utter an obscenity, to use the name of an unmentionable act for a decent thing like marriage.

This observation of ar-Rāghib is very good; but for this reasoning to be valid, the word *'aqd* (العقد) should be taken to mean the marriage-tie, not the formulae of the proposal and acceptance of marriage. The *mushrikāt* (idolatresses, المشركات) is the *ismu 'l-fā'il* (active participle, i.e. the noun derived from an infinitive verb denoting its doer, اسم الفاعل) of the verb *ishrāk* (الاشراک) which means ''to ascribe a partner to Allāh''; it is also called polytheism. It is well-known that polytheism may be open or hidden, and these two qualities may be of various degrees and grades. The same is the case with belief and disbelief.

The most open kind of polytheism is to believe that there is more than one god and to take and worship idols and treat them as intercessors before God. Less open is the polytheism of the people of the book, as they deny the prophethood of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.), and, especially their belief that ‘Uzayr was the son of God, or ‘Īsā was the son of God, and so is their claim that they themselves are sons of God, and His beloved. All this is polytheism, but less manifest than that of the idolaters. More hidden than that is believing that apparent causes independently create their effects; and then relying on these causes.

The most hidden polytheism is the one from which only the chosen servants of Allāh, with pure hearts, can escape. And that is to be forgetful of Allāh and to divert attention to other than Him.

But there is an important point which must be cleared here. Attributing a verb, adjective or active participle (in its literal sense) to someone is one thing; but using that adjective or active participle as a nomenclature is an entirely different matter. If a believer neglected an obligatory act, it might be said that he denied it or disbelieved in it; but the nomenclature, unbeliever/disbeliever, cannot be used for him. Allāh says: *and for the sake of Allāh, pilgrimage to the House is incumbent upon men* (upon) *everyone who can afford the journey to it*; *and whoever disbelieves, then surely Allāh is Self-sufficient, independent of the worlds*. (3:97) Here the verb, ‘‘disbelieves’’, has been used for him who neglects the pilgrimage, still he is not called an ‘‘unbeliever’’, he is a sinner; and if the adjective ‘‘unbeliever’’ or ‘‘disbeliever’’ is used for him at all, it must be conditional, e.g. ‘‘disbeliever in pilgrimage’’.

The same is the case with all active participles and adjectives used in the Qur’ān, like righteous, thankful, purified; and like sinner, unjust, etc. These terms cannot be used as a nomenclature in every place where the verb, adjective or active participle is used.

Accordingly, we cannot use the nomenclature, polytheist, for all those who indulge in hidden or open polytheism. ‘‘Idolater’’ or ‘‘polytheist’’ is a Qur’ānic terminology and we should look at the Qur’ān to know who is called a polytheist. The Qur’ān does not use this term for the Jews or the Christians. Instead it invented for them a new term, ‘‘people of the book’’. And the term ‘‘disbeliever’’ (*kāfir,* الكافر) is general, covering all those who are outside the pale of Islam.

So far as the term, polytheist or idolater, is concerned, the Qur'ān uses it in a context where it is known that the disbelievers, other than the people of the book, are meant. See, for example, the following verse: *Those who disbelieved from among the people of the book and the polytheists could not have separated themselves* (from the faithful) *until there had come to them the clear evidence* (98:1); *... the idolaters are nothing but unclean, so they shall not approach the Sacred Mosque after this year ...* (9:28); *then slay the idolaters wherever you find them* (9:5); *How can there be an agreement for the idolaters with Allāh and with His Apostle?* (9:7); *... and fight the polytheists all together as they fight you all together ...* (9:36) etc.

Now we come to the verse: And they said: Be Jews or Christians, you will be rightly guided. Say: Nay! (We follow) the religion of Ibrāhīm, the upright one, and he was not one of the polytheists. (2:135) The last sentence, ''he was not one of the polytheists'', is not an innuendo against the Jews and the Christians. To know its meaning, let us look at another verse: Ibrāhīm was not a Jew, nor a Christian; but he was an upright (man), a Muslim, and he was not one of the polytheists. (3:67). The word ''upright (man)'' is an adverse allusion to the Jews and the Christians; it exalts Ibrāhīm above the soulless ritualism of the Jews as well as the dogmatism of the Christians, the materialism of the one and the misguided spiritualism of the other. It says that Ibrāhīm was on the middle path, neither a Jew nor a Christian. And then it uses the word ''a Muslim'', and shows that he was purely a Muslim, not ascribing any partner, associate or colleague to Allāh; and then it adversely alludes to the polytheists by the words, ''he was not one of the polytheists.'' Likewise, in verse 2:135, the word ''the upright one'' indirectly hints against the Jews and the Christians who had gone astray; and the sentence, ''and he was not one of the polytheists'' alludes to the idol-worshippers.

In short, this verse does not refer to the Jews and the Christians as polytheists.

Now we come to some verses where the active participle, polytheist (*mushrik,* المشرک) has been used for other than idol-worshippers:-

> *And most of them do not believe in Allāh without associating other* (with Him). (12:106)
>
> *... and woe to the polytheists who do not give zakāt, and they are*

unbelievers in the hereafter. (41:6—7)

His (Satan's) *power is only over those who befriend him and those who associate others with Him* (Allāh). (16:100)

These verses have used the active participle, ''polytheists'', for those who, for example, befriend Satan and are under his power. Obviously, almost all the believers (except an infinitesimal minority who are friends of Allāh, and are His truly righteous servants) would come under this definition. But we would not be justified in giving them the name, ''polytheists'' because the active participle and the nomenclature are two different things.

This lengthy explanation shows that the apparent meaning of the verse under discussion prohibits marriage with idol-worshipping men and women only; marriage with the people of the book is not included in this verse.

In this context, there are no grounds at all for saying that this verse abrogated verse 6 of the chapter of al-Mā'idah; This day have been made lawful for you (all) good things; and the food of those who were given the book is lawful to you and your food lawful for them; and the chaste (ones) from the believing women and the chaste (ones) from those who were given the book before you (are lawful for you) when you have given them their wage (dower) with chaste intention, not fornicating nor taking them for paramours in secret … (5:6) Nor is there any reason for saying that this verse (2:221) joined with the verse*,... and hold not to the ties of marriage of unbelieving women ...* (60:10), abrogates verse 5:6. Nor is it correct to say that the verse 5:6 has abrogated the two verses, 2:221 and 60:10.

Why are the above opinions wrong?

It is because:

First: As explained above, the verse under discussion apparently says nothing about marriage with the people of the book, while the verse of the chapter of *al-Mā'idah* (5:6) *is* concerned only with marriage with the people of the book. As the subject matters of the two verses are totally different, there is no question of one of them abrogating the other.

So far as verse 60:10 *is* concerned, it speaks about not holding ties of marriage with unbelieving women, and at the first glance it appears contradictory to verse 5:6 which allows marriage with chaste women of the people of the book. But a little more thinking will show (as will be

explained later on) that this speaks about a man who accepts Islam and his wife remains a disbeliever, then he is forbidden to hold intact the marriage-tie with that woman, while the verse 5:6 speaks about performing a new marriage with a woman who is from the people of the book. The subject matters, therefore, of the two verses are not the same. Accordingly there arises no question of abrogation at all.

Second: Even if we accept for the time being that verses 2:221 and 60:10 forbid marriage with a Jewess or a Christian woman, the context compels us to believe that they cannot abrogate verse 5:6 which allows that marriage. Verse 5:6 shows some relaxation of the rule and Allāh describes it as His grace upon the believers. Such a verse cannot be abrogated. In Islam relaxed rules usually get the upper hand over strict ones. Therefore, if there were any abrogation, verse 5:6 would abrogate verses 2:221 and 60:10*,* and not vice versa.

Third: The chapter of *al Baqarah* (ch. 2) was the first one revealed at Medina soon after *Hijrah ;* and the chapter of *al-Mumtaḥanah* (ch. 60) was revealed at Medina before the take-over of Mecca in 8 A.H.: while the chapter of *al-Mā'idah* (ch. 5) was the last one revealed — it abrogated some previous rules but no rule revealed in it was ever abrogated.

How could the verses revealed before the chapter 5 abrogate the verse of that chapter which was yet to be revealed?

Qur'ān: *and certainly a believing bondswoman is better than an idolatress, even though she should allure you*: The people at that time accorded no dignity to slave-girls and anyone marrying such a woman immediately became an object of scorn. This verse, by qualifying the word ''bondswoman'' with the adjective ''believing'' and leaving the word ''idolatress'' without any condition, emphasizes the principle that a believing woman, even if she is a slave, is better than an idolatress even if she comes from a noble family and is rich and beautiful — the factors which usually attract a man towards a woman.

Someone has said that the word ''bondswoman'' (*amah,* أمة) here and the word ''bondsman'' (*'abd,* عبد) in the next sentence, mean slave woman and slave man of Allāh — in other words, believing woman and believing man. But this interpretation is farfetched.

Qur'ān: *and certainly a believing bondsman is better than an idolater, even though he should allure you*: The same comment as above.

Qur'ān: *Those invite to the fire, and Allāh invites to the garden and to forgiveness by His leave* :

It explains the reason why marriage with idol-worshippers has been prohibited. The idolaters believe in falsehood, walk on the wrong path, and, thus, evil characteristics become firmly rooted in their psychology. Disbelief and sin look attractive to them and their eyes lose the ability to see the light of truth. As a result, their whole life becomes an open invitation to follow them to eternal perdition. In short, by their actions and talks they try to allure and entice the believers to the fire of hell.

The believers, on the other hand, proceed on the path of true faith, and live a righteous and virtuous life; and by their good example in words and deeds invite people to the paradise and the Lord's forgiveness by His leave, as He allowed them to call the people into the right path, leading them to eternal bliss — paradise and forgiveness.

Apparently, it would have looked proper to say, ''and these (i.e. the believers) invite to the paradise…'', as the contrasting sentence says: ''those invite to the fire.'' But Allāh used His own name instead of the believers to show that the believers in this invitation, nay, in all their activities and affairs, rely on their Creator and Lord; they are not independent of Allāh, their Master. Allāh says:*...and Allāh is the Master of the believers*. (3:68)

This sentence may be interpreted also in another way: The invitation to the garden and to forgiveness may be a reference to this law itself — the rule forbidding marriage with polytheists is in itself an invitation to paradise and the forgiveness of Allāh.

TRADITIONS

It is written about this verse that it was revealed about Marthad ibn Abī Marthad al-Ghanawī. The Messenger of Allāh sent him to Mecca to bring some Muslims out; and he was a strong and brave man. A woman, 'Unāq by name, offered him her person, but he refused; they had been friends before the advent of Islam. Then she said: ''Well, will you then agree to marry me?'' He said: ''Not before I seek permission from the Messenger of Allāh'' When he returned (to Medina), he asked permission to marry her. [*Majma'u 'l-bayān*]

The author says: The same thing has been narrated in *ad-Durru 'l-*

manthūr from Ibn ‘Abbās.

al-Wāḥidī has narrated through the chain of as-Suddī from Abū Mālik from Ibn ‘Abbās about this verse that it was revealed about ‘Abdullāh ibn Rawāḥah. He had a black slave-girl; once he became angry and slapped her (on the face). Then he felt frightened, and coming to the Prophet told him the story. The Prophet said: ‘‘What is she? O ‘Abdullāh!’’ He replied: ‘‘She keeps the fast, prays, does *wuḍū* properly, and offers testimony that there is no god except Allāh and that you are His Messenger.’’ The Prophet said: ‘‘O ‘Abdullāh! She is a believing woman.’’ ‘Abdullāh said: ‘‘By Him Who sent you with truth! I shall surely set her free and then marry her.’’ He did so. Some Muslims ridiculed him and said, ‘‘Lo! He married a slave-girl’’. They thought it better to establish marriage-ties with polytheist men and women, because they were of ‘‘honourable’’ families. Then Allāh revealed: *and certainly a believing bondswoman is better than an idolatress ...* [*ad-Durru’l-manthūr*]

Another tradition, quoted in the same book from Muqātil says that she was a bondswoman of Ḥudhayfah, whom he emancipated and married.

The author says: The above traditions are not contradictory. Maybe there were various such cases, and then the verse was revealed covering all of them.

There are some traditions showing that this verse abrogated verse 5:6, or was abrogated by it. We have shown the absurdity of these views, and we shall discuss those traditions when commenting on verse 5:6.

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ قُلْ هُوَ أَذًى فَاعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ وَلَا
تَقْرَبُوهُنَّ حَتَّى يَطْهُرْنَ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللهُ إِنَّ اللهَ
يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ ـ ٢٢٢. نِسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَكُمْ فَأْتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ
أَنَّى شِئْتُمْ وَقَدِّمُوا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ مُلَاقُوهُ وَبَشِّرِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ـ ٢٢٣.

And they ask you about menstruation. Say it is a dis comfort; *therefore, keep aloof from the women during the menstruation and do not go near them until they have become clean*; *then when they have cleansed themselves, go in them as Allāh has commanded you; surely Allāh loves those who purify themselves*. (222) *Your women are a tillage for you, so go unto your tillage when you like, and do good beforehand for yourselves*; *and fear Allāh, and know that you are to meet Him, and give good news to the believers*. (223)

COMMENTARY

Qur'ān: *And they ask you about menstruation. Say*: *It is a discomfort*: *maḥīḍ* (المحيض) and *ḥayḍ* (الحيض) are verbal infinitives; the Arabs say: *ḥāḍati 'l-mar'aḥ* (حاضت المرأة) when the natural system of the woman discharges the well-known periodic blood, which has its own special colour, etc. and is a peculiarity of women. Its active participle (*ismu 'l-fā'il,* اسم الفاعل) is used in both masculine and feminine genders, because there is no risk of misunderstanding. They say *ḥā'iḍ* (الحائض) and *ḥāiḍah* (الحائضة) i.e. the woman having monthly period; as they say *ḥāmil* (الحامل) and *ḥāmilah* (الحاملة) i.e. the pregnant women.

Adhā (الاذى) means discomfort and distress. Some people say that it is synonymous with *ḍarar* (harm, loss,الضّرر) . But it is not correct. The opposite of *ḍarar* (harm, loss , الضّرر) is *naf'* (benefit, profit, النّفع); but *naf'* (النّفع) is not the opposite of *adhā* (الاذى) **.** Also people say *dawāun muḍirrun* (harmful medicine, دوآء مضر); but if

they said *dawā'un mu'dhin* (دوآء مؤذ) it would give another meaning; disagreeable or unpleasant medicine. Moreover, the Qur'ān says: *They shall by no means harm you* (*lan yaḍurrūkum,* لن يضرّوكم) *but with a distress* (*adhḍ,* اذى) (3:111) There would be no sense if you read it as: ''they shall by no means harm you but with a harm.'' In some other verses, also, it is difficult to interpret *adhā* (اذى) as *ḍarar* (loss, harm, ضرر): *Surely* (as for) *those who annoy* (*yu'dhūna,* يوذون) *Allāh and His Apostle ...* (33:57); *O my people! Why do you give me trouble* (*tu'dhūnanī,* تؤذونني) *and you know indeed that I am Allāh's Apostle to you* (61:5). Apparently, discomfort (*adhā,* اذى) signifies the effect of a disagreeable thing, and there may be times when a situation can be a discomfort as well as a harm or loss.

Menstruation is called *adhā* (اذى) in the meaning described above — discomfort, distress, disagreeable.

Those who interpret *adhā* (اذى) as harm, say that the question was about sexual intercourse during the monthly period, and Allāh replied that it was harmful. The physicians have said that at that time nature is occupied with cleansing the womb and making it ready for pregnancy, and sexual intercourse in the midst of that would creat a disturbance which is harmful to the health.

Qur'ān: *therefore, keep aloof from the women during the menstruation and do not go near them...*: *i'tizāl* (اعتزال) means to withdraw, to retire, to avoid mingling. They say *'azalta naṣībahu* (عزلت نصيبه) when you separate his share and keep it in a place away from the others' shares.

Qurb (to be near, القرب) is the opposite of *bu'd* (to be far away, distant, البعد). It is used with the preposition *min* (from, من) and also without any preposition, as in this verse.

Keep aloof from woman during the menstruation means ''do not establish sexual relation with them during the passing of blood.''

People have had different views and customs about women in their monthly period. The Jews were extremely harsh in this matter. They ostracized such a woman even in food and drink. Her pots were separated, she took her meal apart from others, sat away from all the household, and slept alone. The Torah had ordained very severe rules concerning that period: about the woman as, well as about those who

were unfortunate enough to go near her or even to touch her.

The Christians had no restriction at all about mingling, or even sleeping with them. The pagans of Arabia had no fixed rule. The Arabs of Medina and its neighbourhood had adopted some of the Jewish customs, and had thus made the lives of rich women difficult for them. On the other hand some pagans liked to have sexual intercourse with them in the belief that if a woman became pregnant at that time, the child would be cruel and extremely fond of shedding blood — these were admirable qualities for a man among the bedouins!

Apparently the words of this verse confirm the Jewish custom, but it is not so. When we read the next sentence, *then when they have cleansed themselves, go in to them as Allāh has commanded you,* we know that it means 'going in to them from their front'. It means that it was only this act, i.e. sexual intercourse in to their front, which was prohibited by the preceding sentences, and that the words, ''keep aloof from them'' and ''do not go near them'' are not used in their literal meaning; rather they are metaphors for sexual relations. Accordingly, this verse prohibits only this one action, and imposes no restriction whatsoever on mingling with them in food, drink, sleep, etc. In short, Islam adopted the middle course between the severe restrictions of the Jews and the free license of the Christians.

The word ''menstruation'' (*maḥīḍ,* المحيض) appears in the question, and then again in the answer (*keep aloof ... during the menstruation*) Why has the word been repeated instead of using a pronoun in the answer? It is because there is a difference in meaning of the two words: the first refers to the menstruation, and the second to its period.

Qur'ān: *until they have become clean*; *then when they have cleansed themselves, go into them as Allāh has commanded you*:

Cleanliness (*ṭahārah,* الطّهارة) and its opposite, uncleanliness (*najāsah,* النّجاسة) are among the most extensively applied concepts in Islam. They have their own comprehensive laws which cover a major part of religious commandments. The two words, because of their very common use, have become *al-ḥaqīqatu 'sh-shar'iyyah* (الحقيقة الشّرعيّة) as though they were ''originally made to express these religious concepts.''

The meaning of cleanliness is known to the whole of mankind inspite of the differences in their languages. It shows that the idea of *ṭahārah* (الطّهارة) is well-known to all human beings whatever their origin and period.

Life depends on exploiting material things, and using them to achieve its goal. Man desires whatever he desires only because of its benefit, use and characteristics. The most basic and most comprehensive are the benefits concerned with feeding and reproduction.

Sometimes some changes occur in these material things which cause repulsion; and man wants to throw such things away. Such changes appear mostly in taste, smell or colour. When this change appears, the material becomes unsavoury and repulsive. This change is called uncleanliness (*najāsah,* النّجاسة). Its opposite is *ṭahārah* (الطّهارة) which implies that the thing is still in its original condition of benefit and use, which attracts the man to it.

Cleanliness and uncleanliness are, therefore, two mutually exclusive qualities of a thing: it has either a quality which makes it lie likeable or another which makes it repulsive.

Man in the beginning must have perceived these qualities within the sphere of the five senses; gradually the concept would have been widened to cover mental and spiritual subjects, depending on whether those ideas were attractive or repulsive. Thus we come to the concept of *ṭahārah* (الطّهارة) and *najāsah* (النّجاسة) in parentage, character, belief, action and word.

There are four words with nearly the same meaning: *naẓāfah* (النّظافة), *nazāhah* (النّزاهة), *quds* (القدس) and *subḥān* (سبحان)

Naẓāfah (النظافة): It is the cleanliness of a thing after it had become unclean. It is exclusively used for the things which may be perceived by one of the five senses.

Nazāhah (النّزاهة): Its real meaning is ''to be far away, distant''. Its use for cleanliness is metaphorical — the thing is far from ugliness, uncleanliness.

Quds (قدس) and *subḥān* (سبحان) are preserved for mental and spiritual subjects.

Near in meaning to *najāsah* (النجاسة) are *qadhārah* (filthiness, القذارة), *rijs* (dirtiness, الرّجس) and *rujz* (uncleanliness, الرّجز).

Qadhārah (القذارة): Its real meaning is ''to be distant''. The verbs and adjectives derived from this verbal infinitive are used for a she-camel which remains aloof from the drove, for an unsocial man who does not mingle with others, for a person isolated from others and for a thing which is disliked. Therefore, its use in the meaning of *najāsah* (النّجاسة) must be metaphorical because an unclean thing is left and put aside until

it is clean again.

Rijs (الرّجس) and *rujz* (الرّجز): Their original meaning is fright and aversion. Their use in the meaning of uncleanliness is metaphorical.

Islam has extended the meaning of cleanliness and uncleanliness to cover not only the things perceived by the five senses but also to ideas and thoughts. According to Islam, even general principles and social laws are either clean or unclean. For example, Allāh says in this verse: *do not go near them until they have become clean ...* (Here cleanliness refers to cessation of menstruation, — a material cleanliness) Also, He says: *And your garments do purify* (74:4); *... but He intends to purify you ...* (5:6); *These are they whom Allāh does not intend to purify their hearts* …(5:41); *None shall touch it save the purified ones.* (56:79) Some of these verses refer to spiritual purifications and cleanliness.

The Islamic *sharī'ah* treats some unclean things as *al-a'yanu'n-najisah* (inherently unclean things, الاعيان النّجسة). Some of them are the blood, urine, stool and semen of man and of some animals, corpses, dogs and pigs. It has ordered the believers to protect themselves from these things in prayers, food and drink.

Ṭahārah (الطّهارة) is of two categories: From *khabath* (الخبث) by which one becomes clean after coming into touch with the above mentioned inherently unclean things; and from *ḥadath* (الحدث), which comes through *wuḍū* or an obligatory bath as explained in the books of Islamic laws.

It was explained earlier that Islam is the religion of monotheism. This monotheism is the root to which all the branches owe their existence. Now the belief in monotheism is the highest cleanliness before Allāh. After that come other fundamentals of faith, and they increase the spiritual purification of man. Then comes ethical righteousness, and the laws of *sharī'ah* made for the good in this world and the hereafter. The verse quoted above may be explained by keeping this principle in view. Also, it explains the verse of purity, *Allāh only desires to keep away the uncleanliness from you, O People of the House! and to purify you a* (thorough) *purifying*. (33:33)

Now we return to the explanation of the words used in this verse under discussion: ''until they have become clean'', i.e. until the blood stops. That is the beginning of the period of cleanliness (*ṭuhr,* الطّهر).

Then when they have cleansed themselves, i.e., when they have taken

an obligatory bath or at least washed the part of body from where blood comes out.

go into them as Allāh has commanded you: This command comes after the order forbidding sexual relation with them; therefore, it signifies only that the restriction is now lifted; in other words, it means that sexual relations with them are allowed after their becoming clean, not that it is obligatory. *Go into them* is a metaphor for that relation. It is an example of the character building of the Qur'ān; as is the phrase, *as Allāh has commanded you.* Sexual relations are generally regarded as an amusement. But the Qur'ān draws man's attention to the fact that it is a thing ordered by Allāh, the order being ingrained in his nature. We may call it a creative order — an order given not in words, but programmed into our creation and nature. Thus the Qur'ān reminds us that it is an action without which the human species cannot survive; such an important function should not be treated as a sport or an amusement; it is one of the fundamental laws of nature.

This verse is similar to the words of Allāh:...*now be in contact with them and seek what Allāh has written for you* ... (2:187), and:... *go into your tillage when you like, and do good beforehand for yourselves* ... (2:223)

Apparently, the order to go into them refers to that ''creative order'' which is known because Allāh has given human beings reproductive organs and has created in them the power and inclination which lead them to reproduce.

Possibly the ''command'' could be interpreted as a legislative order: that it was obligatory to marry for a sufficient number of people to ensure continuity of the human race. But such a meaning is far-fetched.

Some commentators argue that the words *as Allāh has commanded you* prohibit going into the posterior of the women. But it is the weakest argument; this subject is difficult to prove from this verse. The argument cannot be based on the order, *go into them,* because, as explained earlier, this order, coming after a prohibition, signifies only the permission to establish sexual contact, it is not an obligatory rule. Therefore, if one were to ignore it one would not be committing an offence. Nor can it be argued on the strength of the words, as *Allāh has commanded you,* because, the command referred to herein is the creative, not the legislative one, as we have explained just now. And even if we accept, for the sake

of argument, that it is a legislative order, it would be obligatory for only ‘‘a sufficient number of people’’, as we have explained above. And going against an obligatory order is unlawful only when that order is personally obligatory on oneself.

Qur’ān: *Surely Allāh loves those who turn much* (to Him) *and He loves those who purify themselves*: *tawbah* (usually translated as repentance, التّوبة) means returning to Allāh. *Taṭahhur* (التّطهّر) means purifying and cleansing oneself; in other words, turning away from dirtiness and returning to the original cleanliness. The meanings of both words come true when one obeys the command of Allāh, and especially so in the matters of cleanliness and uncleanliness. By doing whatever Allāh has told one to do, and abstaining from what He has forbidden, one purifies oneself from the uncleanliness of disobedience, and comes back to his Lord. That is why Allāh has ended this verse on these words; they are, therefore, applied to all the rules mentioned before them - *Keep aloof from the women during the menstruation* and *go into them as Allāh has commanded you.*

The sentences, *Surely Allāh loves those who turn much* (to Him) *and He loves those who purify themselves,* are not limited with any qualification or condition. Therefore, they apply to all the grades of cleanliness, as mentioned earlier. And the forms *mutaṭahhirīn* (المتطهّرين) and *tawwābīn* (التوّابين) signify great emphasis. These two factors taken together signify that Allāh loves all kinds of repentance (be it by asking for His for giveness, obeying all His commands or having true faith and belief) and all kinds of purification (be it by washing oneself, doing ablution, taking the obligatory bath, performing good deeds or acquiring true spiritual knowledge). Also, it signifies an increase by number: Allāh loves repeated repentance and repeated cleanliness.

Qur’ān: *Your women are a tillage for you, so go unto your tillage when you like* : *ḥarth* (الحرث) is an infinitive verb, meaning to ‘‘to till, to cultivate’’. It is also used for the land which is tilled or cultivated.

Annā (انّى) is an adverb meaning ‘‘when’’, ‘‘whenever’’. In this sentence it is synonymous with *matā* (when, متى). Sometimes it is also used for ‘‘where’’. Allāh says:... *O Maryam! Whence* (*annā,* انّى) *comes this to you? She said*: *It is from Allāh.*(3:36)

If, in the verse under discussion, *annā* (انّى) means ‘‘where’’, then its meaning would be, ‘‘where you like’’. If it means, ‘‘when’’, then it

means, ‘‘when you like’’. In any case, it gives a sort of freedom to the couple, and that is why we cannot take the words, ‘‘*so go unto your tillage*’’, to be an obligatory order. No one gives a compulsory order and then leaves it in the hands of the doer to do as he likes.

The verse begins with the sentence, *Your women are a tillage for you*; after this reasoning comes the order, and there also the word ‘‘*tillage*’’ is repeated. This emphasis shows that the freedom given to man of going in to the women is either about the place of the intercourse or about its time; but it is not a freedom of entering anywhere in her body. She is a *tillage* and that idea must be kept in mind when approaching her.

If the order means, ‘so go into your *tillage* at any place you like’, then it is not concerned with the time of intercourse, and has no conflict whatsoever with the previous verse, *keep aloof from the women during the menstruation and do not go near them.* If, on the other hand, it means, ‘so go into your *tillage* at any time you like’, then it shall be limited to the period of purity from menstruation, because of the previous verse.

Just to avoid any misunderstanding, it is necessary to point out that this verse could not have abrogated the verse of menstruation — no matter whichever of the two was revealed first: The verse of menstruation gives two reasons why sexual relation in that period is forbidden — and both reasons are still valid, in spite of the verse of *tillage*. First, it says that menstruation is a discomfort and it continues to be a discomfort. Second, it shows that this order was given to avoid dirtiness and to remain clean, and Allāh always loves those who remain clean and pure; so much so that He counts keeping them cleansed as one of His graces upon them ; *Allāh does not desire to put on you any difficulty, but He intends to purify you and that He may complete His favour on you ...* (5:6) Such a language cannot be abrogated by a verse like that of *tillage*. Why? Because this verse says that your women are your tillage, so come into your tillage when you like. Now, the reason for this putative ‘‘concession’’ was present even when the prohibition was ordained. If it could not stop its promulgation, how can it cause its abrogation after it had already been firmly established? Second, the verse of tillage ends on the words, ‘‘and do good beforehand for yourselves, and fear Allāh, and know that you will meet Him.’’ Such an

ending would be out of place if the verse (of tillage) contained a concession.

The meaning of the verse is as follows: Women are to humanity as tillage is to an individual. Agricultural land is needed to preserve the seed and to produce food, so that the human race may continue to exist. Likewise, women are needed for the continuity of humanity. According to the system created by Allāh, the woman's womb is the place where a child is made and develops from a microscopic sperm to a human being. As the original place of that sperm is the body of man, He created between the man and the woman a love and compassion and an attraction which excites the man to seek the woman.

As the creative purpose of this mutual attraction is to pave the way for the continuity of the human race, there was no reason why it should be confined to one place and not another, or one time and not another, as long as it helped in achieving that goal and did not hinder any other obligatory work.

This explanation shows the relevance of the words *do good beforehand for yourselves,* coming after the verse of tillage.

Someone has written that the verse of tillage gives permission to remove the male organ from the woman just before ejaculation. Such an interpretation is patently absurd. No less absurd is the view that the words, *do good beforehand* mean saying*...bismi'llāh ...* (by the name of Allāh ......بسم .الله) before the intercourse.

Qur'ān: *and do good beforehand for yourselves*; *and fear Allāh, and know that you are to meet Him, and give good news to the believers.* Obviously, these words addressed to males, or both males and females, are a sort of encouragement to keep the human species alive through marriage and reproduction. But is not an end in itself. Mankind and its continuity is desired only for the continuity of the religion of Allāh, the dominance of monotheism and the divine worship through piety. Allāh says: *And I did not create the jinn and the human beings except that they should worship Me*. (51:56) When He commands them to do anything concerning their life in this world, it is done only to make it easier for them to worship their Lord; it is not done with the aim of encouraging them to submerge themselves in sexual desire and wordly attractions.

No doubt the apparent meaning of *do good beforehand for*

yourselves is ‘‘reproduce and bring into this world new souls to replace those who are dying every day’’; but it is not the final goal: the real aim is to keep the remembrance of Allāh going on, by producing righteous people who will do good deeds, the recompense and reward of which will reach their forefathers who were instrumental in bringing those good-doers into the world. Allāh says: *...and We write down what they have sent before and their footprints ...* (36:12)

This leads us to believe that the real meaning of *do good beforehand for yourselves* is ‘send good deeds beforehand for the day of resurrection’. Allāh says:*...the day when man shall see what his two hands have sent before ...* (78:40); *... and whatever of good you send on beforehand for yourselves you will find it with Allāh ...* (73:20)

This verse under discussion (*and do good beforehand for yourselves, and fear Allāh, and know that you are to meet Him ...*) is similar to verse 59:18: *O you who believe! Fear Allāh, and let every soul consider what it has sent on for tomorrow and fear Allāh; surely Allāh is Aware of what you do.*

In short, the meaning of these sentences is as follows:-

and do good beforehand for yourselves: Send on good deeds beforehand for the day of resurrection. Producing children and training them to be righteous servants of Allāh and good members of the society is one of those good deeds.

and fear All`ah : *taqwā* (fear of Allāh, piety, التقوى) consists of going into the tillage as commanded by Allāh, neither exceeding the limits imposed by Him, neglecting the divine ordinance, nor committing unlawful acts.

and know that you are to meet Him. The order, in fact, means ‘fear Allāh whom you have to meet on the day of resurrection, lest your reckoning be severe’. The same is the significance of verse 59:18, mentioned earlier which says: *and fear Allāh; surely Allāh is Aware of what you do.* It is not uncommon to use the verb ‘‘to know’’ for the meaning ‘‘to be on guard’’, ‘‘to safeguard’’ and ‘‘to look out’’. Allāh says:... *and know that Allāh intervenes between man and his heart ...* (8:24); it means, ‘be afraid of His intervention between you and your hearts.’

and give good news to the believers. Good deeds and fear of the day of reckoning are the chief characteristics of faith. Therefore, the talk was

ended by giving good news to the believers.

For this very reason, verse 59:18 began with the words: *O you who believe.*

TRADITIONS

Aḥmad, ‘Abd ibn Ḥamīd, ad-Dārimī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasā’ī, Ibn Mājah, Abū Ya‘lā, Ibn al-Mundhir, Abū Ḥātim, an-Nahḥās (in *an-Nāsikh*), Abū Ḥayyān, and al-Bayhaqī (in his *as-Sunan*) have narrated from Anas: ‘‘The Jews, when a woman of their house was in monthly period, turned her out of the house; they did not eat with her, did not drink with her, nor did they live with her in the same house. The Messenger of Allāh was asked concerning this matter. Then Allāh sent down the verse: *And they ask you about menstruation. Say: It is a discomfort; therefore, keep aloof from the women during the men struation ...* The Messenger of Allāh, therefore, said: ‘Remain with them in the (same) houses, and do everything except sexual intercourse.’ This report reached the Jews, and they said, ‘This man does not want to leave anything to our customs without going against it.’ Usayd ibn al-Ḥuḍayr and ‘Abbād ibn Bishr came and said: ‘O Messenger of Allāh! The Jews are saying so-and-so. Should we not now establish sexual relations also with them?’’ On hearing it the face of the Messenger of Allāh changed and we thought that he had become angry with them. Then they went out; and at the same moment some milk was brought to the Messenger of Allāh as a present; so he sent it behind them and made them drink it. Thus they knew that he was not angry with them.’’ [*ad-Durru ’l-manthūr*]

It is reported from as-Suddī about the verse, *And they ask you about menstruation* that the man who asked it was Thābit ibn ad-Daḥdāḥ. [*ibid.*]

The author says: The same thing has been narrated also from Muqatil.

There is a tradition that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said about the word of Allāh, *go into them as Allāh has commanded you*: It is about seeking a child; therefore seek a child from where Allāh has commanded you. [*at-Tahdhīb*]

aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) was asked: ‘‘What can the husband of a

menstruating woman get from her?'' He said: ''Everything except the front part itself.'' [*al-Kāfī*]

Another tradition is reported from the same Imām about the woman whose blood stops at the end of her usual period. The Imām said: ''If her husband is overcome by sexual desire, then he should order her to wash her front part, then he may touch her, if he so wishes, before she takes her obligatory bath.'' Other tradition adds: ''And the bath is preferable to me.'' [*ibid.*]

The author says: There are numerous traditions of the same meaning. The word used in the Qur'ān is recited *ḥattā yaṭhurna* (till they have become clean حتّى يطهرن); and it refers to the stopping of blood. Therefore, the Qur'ān and these traditions support each other.

It is said that the difference between the two words, *yaṭhurna*(they have become clean, يطهرن) and *yataṭahharna* (they have cleansed themselves, يتطهّرن) is that the second form implies doing something by one's own choice; therefore, it would mean taking the bath; but the first does not imply any choice; thus it would refer to the stopping of blood.

Accordingly, sexual intercourse is prohibited *until they have become clean,* i.e., until the blood stops. As soon as the blood stops, relations are again allowed.

When they have cleansed themselves go into them : If the cleansing refers to washing it would mean that the washing, as described in this tradition, is *sunnah* (commendable); and if it means taking the obligatory bath, then the verse would imply that it is commendable (*sunnah*) to go into them after they have taken their obligatory bath, as the above tradition says, ''and bath is preferable to me''. But in no case does this verse imply that going into them after stopage of blood and before the bath is prohibited, because the moment of prohibition lasts until the blood stops.

There is a tradition about the words of Allāh, *Surely Allāh loves those who turn much* (to Him), *and He loves those who purify themselves,* that aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) said: ''The people used to cleanse themselves (after defecation) with cotton and stones etc. Then was instituted cleansing with water, and it is a good habit. Therefore, the Messenger of Allāh ordered it and did it. Then Allāh sent down in His Book: *Surely Allāh loves those who turn much* (to Him), *and He loves*

those who purify themselves. ''[*al-Kāfī*]

The author says: There are numerous traditions with this meaning, and it is said in some of them that the first man to cleanse himself with water was Barā' ibn 'Āzib; then this verse was revealed and the custom established.

There is a tradition in the same book from Salām ibn al-Mustanīr that he said: ''I was with Abū Ja'far (a.s.) when Ḥimrān ibn A'yun entered and asked him concerning some things. When Ḥimrān wanted to stand up (and go back), he told Abū Ja'far (a.s.): 'I wish to inform you — May Allāh prolong your life and may He grant us the benefit of your presence — that we come to you; and before we go out from your presence, our hearts become soft, our souls think no more about this world, and we disdain the wealth which people have in their hands. Then we go away from your presence, and when we mingle with people and traders, we (again) love this world.' Abū Ja'far (a.s.) said: 'It is these hearts; at one time they become hard, at another, soft.' Then the Imam continued: 'Surely, the companions of Muḥammad (s.a.w.a.) once told him : ''O Messenger of Allāh! We are afraid of hypocrisy (appearing) in ourselves.'' He asked: ''And why do you feel so?'' They said: ''When we are in your presence and you remind us (of Allāh) and invite us (to piety), we become afraid (of the displeasure of Allāh), and we forget the world and foresake it, so much so that we (seem to) see the hereafter and the garden and the fire; this all is so long as we are in your presence. But as soon as we come out of your presence, and enter these (our) houses, and feel the scent of our children and see our families, our condition changes almost completely, as though we had no conviction of anything. Do you fear that it is hypocrisy on our part?'' Then the Messenger of Allāh told them: ''Not at all. Surely, these steps are of Satan who wants to attract you towards this world. By Allāh! If you continued in that condition which you have just described, you would indeed shake hands with the angels, and would walk upon the water. And had it not been that you commit sins and then seek pardon from Allāh, He would certainly create (another) creation who would commit sins and then ask forgiveness of Allāh, so that Allāh would forgive them. Verily the believer is seduced, (but is also) often-returning (to Allāh).'' Have you not heard the words of Allāh: *Surely Allāh loves those who turn much* (to Him), *and He loves those who purify themselves.* And Allāh says: *And*

that ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him ... (11:3)' ''

The author says: A similar tradition has been reported by al-'Ayyāshī in his *at-Tafsīr.*

The words of the Prophet, ''if you continued in that condition…'' point to the position of *wilāyah* (friendship of Allāh, الولاية) which means keeping aloof from the world and fixing the eyes on to what is with Allāh. We have explained it partly under verse 2:156.

His words, ''And had it not been that you commit sins ...'', allude to a mystery of the divine decree. And we shall talk about it under verse 15:21 (*And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down but in a known measure*) and other such verses.

The words, ''Have you not heard….'', are of Abū Ja'far (a.s.) and are addressed to Ḥimrān. These words interpret *tawbah* (التّوبة) and *ṭahārah* (الطّهارة) as returning to Allāh by desisting from wrong and removing the filth of sins from the soul and the rust of mistakes from the heart. It is an example of deducing a conclusion by looking at a verse from one level while at another level a new result (but never in conflict with the first) may be obtained. For example, the verse, *None shall touch it save the purified ones* (56:79) proves at one level that none has the knowledge of the Book except the sinless members of the family of the Prophet, while, on other level, it declares that touching the writing of the Qur'ān without doing *wuḍu* or taking the bath is prohibited.

Creation progresses, taking from the treasures that are with Allāh, until it reaches the last level of *maqādīr* (the measures, decrees, المقادير). Allāh says: *And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down but in a known measure.* (15:21)

Likewise, the decrees do not come down to us except after passing through various stages of reality. This subject will be further explained under the verse, *He it is Who has revealed the Book to you*; *some of its verses are decesive* ... (3:7)

From above, it may be understood that the verse under discussion, at one level refers to returning the soul and heart to Allāh by cleansing them from the dirt of sins (as mentioned just above), and, at another level, obliges one to take the bath; and at this level these two words would mean returning the body towards Allāh by removing uncleanliness.

This explains also the tradition of the Imām: ‘‘Allāh sent down to Ibrāhīm (a.s.) uprightness (*ḥanīfiyyah,* الحنيفيّة) and it is cleanliness (*ṭahārah,* الطّهارة,). And it is ten things — five in the head, and five in the body. That which is in the head is: trimming the moustache, keeping the beard, cutting the hair, cleansing the teeth, and picking the teeth; and that which is in the body is: removing the hair from the body, circumcision, cutting the nails, taking bath after *janābah (i.e.* after sexual intercourse or ejaculation during sleep), and cleansing by water after an evacuation of the bowel. This is the pure uprightness brought by Ibrāhīm; it was not abrogated, nor will it be abrogated upto the day of resurrection ... ’’ [*at-Tafsīr,* al-Qummī]

There are many traditions showing that the above things are a part of cleanliness. Some of them say: Indeed *nūrah* (hair removing paste,النّورة) is a purifier.

There is a tradition about the words of Allāh: *Your women are a tillage for you ...* narrated by Mu‘ammar ibn Khallād that Abu ’1-Ḥasan ar-Riḍā (a.s.) told him: ‘‘What do you say about going into the women in their posterior? I said: ‘I have been told that the people of Medina have no objection about it.’ He said: ‘Verily the Jews said that if a man comes (into her) from her behind, his child (resulting .from that intercourse) will be cross-eyed. Therefore, Allāh revealed: *Your women are a tillage for you, so go into your filth from where you like,* that is, from their behind.’ ’’ [al-‘Ayyāshī]

There is in the same book a tradition from aṣ-Ṣādiq (a.s.) that he said about this verse: ‘‘From her front and from her behind (but) in the vagina’’.

Another tradition in the same book reports that Abū Baṣīr asked Abū ‘Abdillāh (a.s.) about a man who enters into the posterior of his wife. The Imām expressed his abhorance of it and said: ‘‘Beware of the anus of women.’’ Then he said: ‘‘Your women are a tillage for you, so go into your tillage as you like’’ only means ‘‘whenever you like’’.

The same book narrates from al-Fatḥ ibn Yazīd al-Jurjānī that he wrote same question to ar-Riḍā (a.s.); and the same reply came: ‘‘You asked about the man who enters into a woman in her posterior; the woman is a play-thing; she should not be hurt, and she is a tillage as Allāh has said.’’

The author says: There are numerous traditions with this meaning

narrated from the Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* (a.s.) in *al-Kāfī, at-Tahdhīb,* and *Tafsīrs* of al-'Ayyāshī and al-Qummī. All of them show that the verse of tillage only proves that intercourse should be into the front part. Of course, there is a tradition in *Tafsīr* of al-'Ayyāshī narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn Abī Ya'fūr in which he says: ''I asked Abū 'Abdillāh (a.s.) about going into women in their posterior; he said: 'There is no harm'; then he recited the verse: *Your women are a tillage for you, so go into your tillage when* (as) *you like.*

But, apparently the meaning of ''going into women in their posterior'' means entering into vagina from behind; and the verse quoted supports this meaning, as has been seen in the tradition of Mu'ammar ibn Khallād, mentioned above.

Ibn 'Asākir has narrated a tradition from Jābir ibn 'Abdullāh that he said: ''The Anṣār (of Medina) used to go into their women lying down; and the Quraysh (of Mecca) used various postures. A Qurayshite man married a woman from Anṣār, and wanted to sleep with her (in his own way). She said: except in the way it should be done. The case was reported to the Messenger of Allāh; so Allāh revealed: *so go into your tillage when* (as) *you like.* That is, in any posture, standing, sitting or lying down, but it should be into the same passage.'' [*ad Durru 'l-manthūr*]

The author says: This meaning is narrated with numerous chains from various companions, giving the same reason for its revelation. And the tradition of ar-Riḍā (a.s.) has already been quoted giving the same meaning. The words in this last tradition, ''in one passage'' allude to the rule that intercourse should be in the front part only. There are numerous traditions showing that going into their posterior is prohibited; the traditions are from numerous chains through numerous companions from the Prophet.

Even those traditions narrated by our Imāms of *Ahlu 'l-bayt* which show that entering into their posterior is allowed but with the utmost abhorance do not offer the verse of tillage as their proof. They argue on the basis of verse 15:71, which quotes Lūṭ as saying: ''He said: 'These are my daughters if you are to do (aught)'.'' Here Lūṭ (a.s.) offered his daughters to them, knowing well that they did not enter into the front part. And this was not abrogated by any Qur'ānic verse. We shall talk about it there. Here it is enough to say that the verse of tillage has no

relevance to this topic.

But, even according to the Sunnī traditions, the ruling is not unanimous. It has been narrated from ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar, Mālik ibn Anas, Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī and others that they did not see any harm in that practice and they used the verse of tillage as their proof. Ibn ‘Umar goes so far as to say that it was revealed specifically to legalise this practice.

It is reported on the authority of ad-Dār Qutnī (in *al-Gharā’ib* of Mālik) through his chain to Nāfi‘ that he said: ‘‘Ibn ‘Umar told me, ‘Keep the Qur’ān before me, O Nāfi‘!’ Then he recited until he reached the verse: *Your women are a tillage for you, so go into your tillage when you like.* He asked me: ‘Do you know, O Nāfi‘! about whom this verse was revealed?’ I replied: ‘No!’ He said: ‘It was revealed about a man from Anṣār who entered into the posterior of his woman; so people thought it a grave matter. Then Allāh revealed: *Your women are a tillage for you, so go into your tillage when you like.’* I said: ‘From her back side into her front part?’ He said: ‘No. But into her back side itself.’ [*ad Durru ’l-manthūr*]

The author says: This meaning has been narrated from Ibn ‘Umar with numerous chains. Ibn ‘Abdi ’1-Barr has said: ‘‘The tradition with this meaning from Ibn ‘Umar is *ṣaḥīḥ* (correct) well-known and famous.’’

Ibn Rāhwayh, Abū Ya‘lā, Ibn Jarīr, at-Ṭaḥāwī (in his *Mushkilu.’l-āthār*) and Ibn Marduwayh have narrated with good chains from Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī that a man entered into the posterior of his woman; people thought it bad of him; then the verse of tillage was revealed. [*ad Durru ’l-manthūr*]

al-Khaṭīb has narrated in the ‘‘narrators of Malik’’ from Abū Sulaymān al-Jawzjānī that he said: ‘‘I asked Mālik ibn Anas about intercourse with lawful women into their posterior. He told me: ‘Just now I have washed my head (i.e. taken a bath) after (doing) it.’ ’’ [*ibid.*]

aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī has narrated from the chain of Aṣbagh ibn al-Faraj from ‘Abdullāh ibn al-Qāsim that he said: ‘‘I did not find anyone whom I follow in my religion who was doubtful about its legality, (meaning, entering into the back-side ,of the women). Then he read: *Your women are a tillage for you.* Then he asked: ‘So what is more clear than this.’ ’’ [*ibid.*]

There is a tradition in *as-Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd, from Ibn ‘Abbās that he said: ‘‘Surely Ibn ‘Umar, May Allāh forgive him, fell into error (in interpreting the verse of tillage in this way). The fact is that there were some tribes of Medina, and they were idol worshippers, residing with some tribes of the Jews, and they were the people of the Book. And these Medinites thought that the Jews were superior than them in knowledge, and they, therefore, followed them in many of their customs. And those people of the Book did not go to the women but in one posture only (i.e. lying down), and that was most comfortable to the woman. And these tribes of Anṣār of Medina adopted this method from them. Now these Qurayshite used very strange postures; and they enjoyed keeping them in various position — lying down, facing them or entering from their back side. When the emigrants came to Medina, one of them married a woman from Anṣār and started doing like this with her. She complained of it to him and said: ‘We were doing it in one way; you do like that or keep away from me.’ This news spread, till it reached the Messenger of Allāh. Then Allāh revealed the verse: *Your women are a tillage for you, so go into your tillage when you like.* It means, facing them, from their back side or lying down, meaning in the place of child (i.e. in the place where conception may take place).’’

The author says: as-Suyūṭī has narrated it through other chains also, from Mujāhid from Ibn ‘Abbās.

It is reported in the same book: Ibn ‘Abdi ’l-Ḥakam has narrated that ash-Shāfi‘ī argued with Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan on this subject. Ibn al-Ḥasan argued that ‘‘the tillage can be in the front part only.’’ ash-Shāfi‘ī said: ‘‘Then doing it anywhere except in the front part will be prohibited?’’ He agreed. He (ash-Shāfi‘ī) said: ‘‘Do you think, if he did with her between her thighs or in the folds of her belly, is there any tillage in it?’’ He replied: ‘‘No!’’ He asked: ‘‘Will it then be unlawful?’’ He said: ‘‘No!’’ ash-Shāfi‘ī said: ‘‘Then why do you bring an argument which you yourselves do not believe in?’’

It is reported in the same book: Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abi ’l-Ḥātim have narrated from Sa‘īd ibn Jubayr that he said: ‘‘Mujāhid and I were sitting with Ibn ‘Abbās when a man came to him and said: ‘Will you not satisfy me about the verse of menstruation?’ He replied: ‘Surely! Recite it.’ He recited: *And they ask you about menstruation ... go into them as Allāh has commanded you.* Ibn ‘Abbās said: ‘From where the blood was

coming, you are ordered to go into the same place.' The man said: 'Then what about the verse: *Your women are a tillage for you, so go into your tillage when you like?'* He replied: 'O Woe unto thee! Is there any tillage in the posterior? If what you say were correct then the verse of menstruation would be abrogated, because if that place was not open (because of blood) you would go into this (other) place! But his verse means ''whenever you like'' in the night or day!' ''

The author says: The last argument is defective. The verse of menstruation only says that in that period going into the front part of the women is prohibited. If, allegedly, the verse of tillage. allows going into their posterior, it would cover a new subject, and there would be no conflict between it and the verse of menstruation. So, there would be no question of either abrogating the other. Moreover, we have already explained that the verse of tillage does not say that going into women in their posterior is allowed. Of course, some traditions narrated from Ibn 'Abbās argue that the words, ''go into them as Allāh has commanded you'', prove that going into women in their posterior is forbidden. But we have already explained that it is the most defective argument, because the verse only says that entering into their front part is prohibited so long as they have not become clean. It says nothing about other matters; and the verse of filth also says nothing except that one may go into one's tillage at any time.

This subject is from Islamic law; we have dealt here with only that side of it which was relevant to the subject of *at-Tafsīr.*

LIST OF THE IMPORTANT SUBJECTS DEALT WITH IN THIS VOLUME

APPENDIX 'A'

A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE FOURTEEN INFALLIBLES

THE HOLY PROPHET, HIS DAUGHTER AND THE TWELVE HOLY IMĀMS

NOTE: Where there are differences of opinion on the dates of birth or death, the most popular view has been quoted.

Sl. No.	Designation	Agnomen *(Kunyah)*	Name	Father's Name	Title *(Laqab)*	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Martyred by means of	Place of Burial
1.	The Last Prophet of Allāh	Abu 'l-Qāsim	Muḥammad (Aḥmad) (al-Muṣṭafā)	'Abdullāh	Rasūlu'llāh, Nabiyyu'llāh, an-Nabiyy, Khātamu 'n-Nabiyyīn	17th Rabī' I, in the Year of the Elephant. (25. 8. 570 AD)	28th Ṣafar, 11 AH (25. 5. 632 AD)	Natural	Holy Medina, al-Munawwarah, Saudi Arabia.
2.	One of the Fourteen Infallibles	Umm Abīhā	Fāṭimah	Muḥammad	az-Zahrā', aṣ-Ṣiddīqah, al-Batūl, Sayyidatu 'n-Nisā'.	20th Jumādā II, in the fifth Year after the declaration of the Prophethood. (2. 1. 615 AD)	3rd Jumādā II, 11 AH (26. 8. 632)	Injured	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
3.	1st Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan, Abu 'l-Ḥasanayn, Abū Turāb.	'Alī	Abū Ṭālib	Amīr al-Mu'minīn, al-Waṣiyy, al-Murtaḍā, (Ḥaydar).	13th Rajab, 10 Years before the declaration of the Prophethood. (25. 5. 600 AD)	Struck on 19th Ramaḍān (25th January); Died on 21st Ramaḍān 40 AH (27. 1. 661 AD)	Sword – while he was engaged in prayers.	Holy an-Najaf al-Ashraf, Iraq. (al-Ghariyy)
4.	2nd Imām	Abū Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	'Alī	al-Mujtabā, as-Sibṭ (al-Akbar)	15th Ramaḍān, 3 AH (1. 3. 625 AD)	7th Ṣafar, 50 AH (6. 3. 670 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
5.	3rd Imām	Abū 'Abdillāh	al-Ḥusayn	'Alī	Sayyidu 'sh-Shuhadā', as-Sibṭ (al-Asghar)	3rd Sha'bān, 4 AH (8. 1. 626 AH)	10th Muḥarram, 61 AH (10. 10. 680 AD)	Sword – in the Battle of 'Āshūrā	Holy Karbalā'' (aṭ-Ṭaff), Iraq.
6.	4th Imām	Abū Muḥammad	'Alī	al-Ḥusayn	Zaynu 'l-'Ābidīn, Sayyidu 's-Sājidīn, as-Sajjād.	5th Sha'bān, 38 AH (6. 1. 659 AD)	25th Muḥarram, 94/95 AH (31.10.712/20.10.713 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.

7.	5th Imām	Abū Ja'far	Muḥammad	'Alī	al-Bāqir	3rd Ṣafar, 57 AH (16. 12. 676 AD)	7th Dhi 'l-ḥijjah, 114 AH (28. 1. 733 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
8.	6th Imām	Abū 'Abdillāh, Abū Mūsā.	Ja'far	Muḥammad	aṣ-Ṣādiq	17th Rabī' I, 83 AH (20. 4. 702 AD)	25th Shawwāl, 148 AH (14. 12. 765 AD)	Poison	Holy Medina, Saudi Arabia.
9.	7th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*al-Awwal* = The First), Abū Ibrāhīm	Mūsā	Ja'far	al-Kāẓim, al-'Abd aṣ-Ṣāliḥ, al-'Ālim.	7th Ṣafar, 129 AH (28. 10. 746 AD)	25th Rajab, 183 AH (1. 9. 799 AD)	Poison	Holy al-Kāẓimiyyah, Iraq.
10.	8th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*ath-Thānī* = The Second)	'Alī	Mūsā	ar-Riḍā	11th Dhi 'l-qi'dah, 148 AH – (29.12.765 AD)	17th Ṣafar, 203 AH (24. 8. 818 AD)	Poison	Holy Mashhad, (Ṭūs - Khurāsān), Iran.
11.	9th Imām	Abū Ja'far (*ath-Thānī* = The Second)	Muḥammad	'Alī	at-Taqī, al-Jawād.	10th Rajab, 195 AH (8. 4. 811 AD)	30th Dhi 'l-qi'dah, 220 AH (25. 11. 835 AD)	Poison	Holy al-Kāẓimiyyah, Iraq.
12.	10th Imām	Abu 'l-Ḥasan (*ath-Thālith* = The Third)	'Alī	Muḥammad	an-Naqī, al-Hādī.	2nd Rajab, 212 AH (27. 9. 827 AD)	3rd Rajab, 254 AH (28. 6. 868 AD)	Poison	Holy Sāmarrā' (Surra-man-ra'ā), Iraq.
13.	11th Imām	Abū Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	'Alī	al-'Askarī	8th Rabī' II, 232 AH (3. 12. 846 AD)	8th Rabī' I, 260 AH (1. 1. 874 AD)	Poison	Holy Sāmarrā, Iraq.
14.	12th Imām	Abu 'l-Qāsim	Muḥammad	al-Ḥasan	al-Mahdī, al-Qā'im, al-Ḥujjah, al-Ghā'ib, Ṣāḥibu 'z-Zamān, Ṣāḥibu 'l-Amr, al-Muntaẓar.	15th Sha'bān, 255 AH (29. 7. 869 AD)	Still alive, but in occultation.	– –	– – – –

APPENDIX “B”

In this book the references of the Qur’ãnic verses have been given by writing serial number of the relevant chapter, followed by a colon (:) that is followed by the number/s of the verse/s. The names of the chapters have been omitted for the sake of brevity.

The names of the chapters with their serial numbers are given here for the guidance of the readers.

To find, for instance, the verse 5:67 in the Qur’ãn, the reader should open the fifth chapter, that its, *al-Mã'idah* (اَلمَآئِدة = The Table) and then find the 67th verse.

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
1.	فاتِحَةُ الكِتاب	*Fatihatu 'l-kitãb*	The Opening of The Book
2.	البَقَرة	*al –Baqarah*	The Cow
3.	آل عِمران	*Ãl ‘Imrãn*	The House of Imran
4.	النِّساء	*an-Nisã'*	Women
5.	المَائِدَة	*Al-Mã'idah*	The Table
6.	الأنعام	*Al –An‘ãm*	Cattle
7.	الأعراف	*al-A‘rãf*	The Battlements
8.	الأنفال	*al-Anfãl*	The Spoils
9.	التَّوْبَة	*At-Tawbah*	Repentance
10.	يُونُس	*Yunus*	Jonah

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
11.	هُود	*Hũd*	Hood
12.	يُوسُف	*Yũsuf*	Joseph
13.	الرَّعد	*ar-Ra‘d*	Thunder
14.	اِبراهيم	*Ibrãhīm*	Abraham
15.	الحِجْر	*Al–Ḥijr*	El-Hijr
16.	النَّحل	*An-Naḥl*	The Bee
17.	الاِسْرآء	*al-Isrã'*	The Night Journey
18.	الكَهْف	*al-Kahf*	The Cave
19.	مَريَم	*Maryam*	Mary
20.	طه	*Ṭã Hã*	Ta Ha
21.	الأنبياء	*al-Anbiyã’*	Prophets
22.	الحَجّ	*al-Ḥajj*	The Pilgrimage
23.	المؤمِنون	*al-Mu'minũn*	The Believers
24.	النّور	*an-Nũr*	Light
25.	الفُرقان	*al-Furqãn*	Discrimination (Salvation)
26.	الشّعَراء	*ash-Shu‘arã'*	The Poets
27.	النَّمْل	*an-Naml*	The Ant
28.	القصَص	*al-Qaṣaṣ*	The Stories
29.	العَنْكَبُوت	*al-‘Ankabũt*	The Spider
30.	الرُّوم	*Ar-Rũm*	The Greeks
31.	لُقمان	*Luqmãn*	Lokman
32.	السَّجْدة	*as-Sajdah*	Prostration
33.	الأحزاب	*al-Aḥzãb*	The Confederates
34.	سَبَأ	*Saba'*	Sheba
35.	فاطِر (المَلائِكة)	*Fãṭir (or, al-Malã'ikah)*	The Originator (or The Angels)
36.	يس	*Yã Sīn*	Ya Sin
37.	الصّافّات	*aṣ-Ṣãffãt*	The Rangers
38.	ص	*Ṣãd*	Sad

S.No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
39.	الزُّمَر	*az-Zumar*	The Companies
40.	المُؤْمِن	*al-Mu'min*	The Believer
41.	فُصِّلَت	*Fuṣṣilat*	Distinguished
42.	الشُّورى	*ash-Shũrã*	Counsel
43.	الزُّخْرُف	*az-Zukhruf*	Ornaments
44.	الدُّخان	*ad-Dukhãn*	Smoke
45.	الجاثِية	*al-Jãthiyah*	Hobbling
46.	الأحقاف	*al-Aḥqãf*	The Sand-Dunes
47.	مُحَمّد(ص)	*Muḥammad*	Muhammad
48.	الفَتْح	*al-Fatḥ*	Victory
49.	الحُجُرات	*al Ḥujurãt*	Apartments
50.	ق	*Qãf*	Qaf
51.	الذّاريات	*adh-Dhãriyãt*	The Scatterers
52.	الطُّور	*aṭ-Ṭũr*	The Mount
53.	النَّجْم	*an-Najm*	The Star
54.	القَمَر	*al-Qamar*	The Moon
55.	الرَّحمن	*ar-Raḥmãn*	The All-merciful
56.	الواقِعَة	*al-Wãqi'ah*	The Terror
57.	الحَديد	*al-Ḥadīd*	Iron
58.	المُجادَلة	*Al-Mujãdalah*	The Disputer
59.	الحَشْر	*al-Ḥashr*	The Mustering
60.	المُمتَحَنة	*al-Mumtaḥanah*	The Woman Tested
61.	الصَّف	*aṣ-Ṣaff*	The Ranks
62.	الجُّمُعة	*al-Jumu'ah*	Congregation
63.	المُنافِقُون	*al-Munãfiqũn*	The Hypocrites
64.	التَّغابُن	*at-Taghãbun*	Mutual Fraud
65.	الطَّلاق	*aṭ-Ṭalãq*	Divorce
66,	التَّحْريم	*at-taḥrīm*	The Forbidding
67.	المُلْك	*al-Mulk*	The Kingdom

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
68.	القَلَم	*al-Qalam*	The Pen
69.	الحَاقَة	*al-Ḥãqqah*	The Indubitable
70.	المَعارج	*al-Ma'ãrij*	The Stairways
71.	نُوح	*Nũḥ*	Noah
72.	الجِنّ	*Al-Jinn*	The Jinn
73.	المُزَّمِّل	*al-Muzzammil*	Enwrapped
74.	المُدَّثِّر	*al-Muddaththir*	Shrouded
75.	القِيامَة	*al-Qiyãmah*	The Resurrection
76.	الدَّهر (الإنسان)	*ad-Dahr* (or, *al -Insãn)*	The Time (or, Man)
77.	المُرسَلات	*al-Mursalãt*	The Loosed Ones
78.	النَّبأ	*an-Naba'*	The Tiding
79.	النّازعات	*an-Nãzi'ãt*	The Pluckers
80.	عَبَس	*'Abas*	He Frowned
81.	التَّكوير	*at-Takwīr*	The Darkening
82.	الإنفِطار	*al-Infiṭãr*	The Splitting
83.	المُطَفِّفين	*al-Muṭaffifīn*	The Stinters
84.	الإنشِقاق	al-Inshiqãq	The Rending
85.	البُروج	*al-Burũj*	The Constellations
86.	الطّارق	*aṭ-Ṭãriq*	The Night-star
87.	الأعلى	*Al-A'lã*	The Most High
88.	الغاشِيَة	*al-Ghãshiyah*	The Enveloper
89.	الفَجْر	*Al-Fajr*	The Dawn
90.	البَلَد	*Al-Balad*	The Land
91.	الشَّمْس	*ash-Shams*	The Sun
92.	اللَّيل	*Al-Layl*	The Night
93.	الضُّحى	*aḍ-Ḍuḥã*	The Forenoon
94.	الإنشِراح	*al-Inshirãh*	The Expanding

S. No.	Arabic Names of the Chapters	Transliteration	Meaning
95.	التِّين	*At-Tīn*	The Fig
96.	العَلَق	*al-'laq*	The Blood-clot
97.	القَدر	*al -Qadr*	Power
98.	البَيِّنَة	*al -Bayyinah*	The Clear Sign
99.	الزّلزال	*Az-Zilzãl*	The Earthquake
100.	العَاديات	*al-'Ãdiyãt*	The Chargers
101.	القارِعَة	*al-Qãri'ah*	The Clatterer
102.	التَكاثُر	*at-Takãthur*	Rivalry
103.	العَصْر	*Al-'Aṣr*	Afternoon
104.	الهُمَزَة	*al-Humazah*	The Backbiter
109.	الفيل	*Al-Fīl*	The Elephant
106.	قُرَيْش	*Quraysh*	Quraish
107.	الماعُون	*al-Mã'ũn*	Charity
108.	الكَوْثَر	*al-Kawthar*	Abũndance
109.	الكافِرون	*al-Kãfirũn*	The Unbelievers
110.	النَّصر	*An-Naṣr*	Help
111.	تَبَّت	*Tabbat* (or, *Lahab)*	Perish (or,The Flame)
112.	الإخْلاص (التَّوحيد)	*al Ikhlãṣ* (or, *at-Tawḥīd)*	Sincere Religion (or, Divine Unity)
113.	الفَلَق	*al-Falaq*	Daybreak
114.	النَّاس	*an-Nãs*	Men